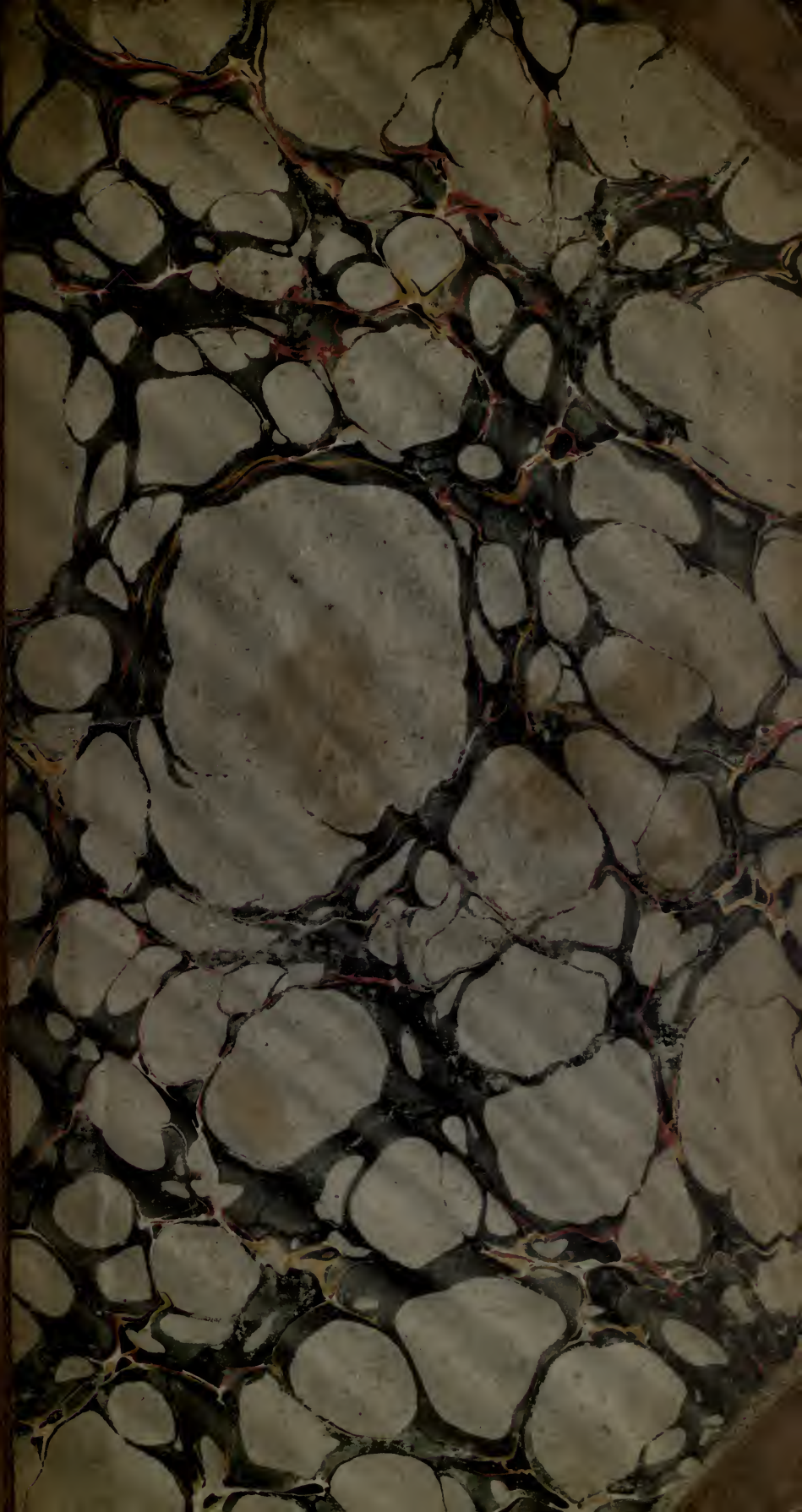

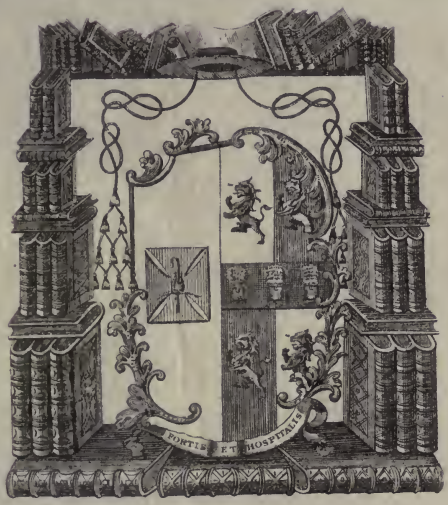

John. Murphy. Bishop.

Cork, 1815.

Thomas Michael Loome

THE

END

OF

Religious Controversy,

IN

A FRIENDLY CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN

A

Religious Society of Protestants

AND A

Roman Catholic Divine.

Addressed to the Right Rev. Lord Bishop of St. David's, in Answer to his Lordship's *Protestant's Catechism.*

PART I.

ON THE RULE OF FAITH;

OR, THE

METHOD OF FINDING OUT THE TRUE RELIGION.

By the Rev. J. M.—D. D.—F. S. A.

London:

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1818.

'Let those treat you harshly, who are not acquainted with the difficulty 'of attaining to truth and avoiding error. Let those treat you harshly, 'who know not how hard it is to get rid of old prejudices. Let those treat 'you harshly, who have not learned how very hard it is to purify the 'interior eye and render it capable of contemplating the sun of the soul, 'truth.——But as to us: we are far from this disposition towards persons, 'who are separated from us, not by errors of their own invention, but by 'being entangled in those of others. We are so far from this disposition, 'that we pray to God, that, in refuting the false opinions of those, whom 'you follow, not from malice, but imprudence, he would bestow upon us 'that spirit of peace, which feels no other sentiment than Charity, no 'other interest than that of Jesus Christ, no other wish but for your sal-'vation.'—*S. Austin, Doctor of the Church, A. D.* 400, *contra Ep. Fund.* c. i. c. ii.

ADDRESS.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

MY LORD,

THE following Letters, with some others belonging to the same series, were written in the latter part of the year 1801, and the first months of 1802, though they have since that time been revised, and, in some respects, altered. They grew out of the controversy, which the principal writer of them was obliged to sustain against an eminent author, a Prebendary of the Cathedral, and the Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester, who had personally challenged him to the field of argument, in a book, called *Reflections on Popery*. That controversy having made some noise in the public, and even in the Houses of Parliament, particularly in the Upper House, where the Lord Chancellor (1) and a predecessor of your Lordship, then the light and glory of the Established

(1) The Right Hon. the Earl of Loughborough.

Church (1), expressed opposite opinions on the issue of it, certain powerful personages expressed an earnest wish for its termination. For this purpose the usual method of silencing authors was at first resolved upon with respect to the writer, and a Catholic Gentleman of name, still living, was commissioned to sound him on the business: but, in conclusion, it was thought most adviseable to employ the influence which the Prelate alluded to, had so justly acquired over him. This method succeeded; and, accordingly, these Letters, which, otherwise, would have been published fifteen years ago, have slept in silence ever since.

I trust your Lordship will not be the person to ask me, why the Letters, after having been so long suppressed, now appear?—You are witness, my Lord, of the increased and increasing virulence of the press against Catholics; and this, in many instances, directed by no ignoble or profane hands. Abundant proofs of this will be seen in the following work. For the present, it is sufficient to mention, that one of your most venerable colleagues publishes and re-publishes that we stand convicted of *Idolatry*, *Blasphemy*, and *Sacrilege*. Another proclaims to the clergy, assembled in Synod, that we are *enemies of all law, human and divine*. More than one of them has charged

(1) The Right Rev. Dr. Horseley, successively Bishop of St. David's, Rochester, and St. Asaph's.

us with the guilt of that Anti-Christian conspiracy on the continent, of which we were exclusively the victims. This dignitary accuses us of *Antinomianism;* that maintains our religion to be *fit only for persons weak in body and in mind.* In short, we seldom find ourselves, or our Religion mentioned, in modern sermons, or other theological works, unaccompanied with the epithets of *superstitious, idolatrous, impious, disloyal, perfidious,* and *sanguinary.* One of the theologues alluded to, who, like many others, has gained promotion by the fervour of his NO POPERY zeal, has exalted his tone to the pitch of proclaiming that our Religion *is calculated for the meridian of hell ! !*— Thus solemnly, and almost continually, charged before the tribunal of the public, with crimes against Society and our Country, no less than against Religion, and yet conscious, all the while, of our entire innocence, it is not only lawful, but also a duty, which we owe to our fellow-subjects and ourselves, to repel these charges by proving that there was *reason,* and *religion,* and *loyalty,* and *good faith* among Christians, before Luther quarrelled with Leo X., and Henry VIII. fell in love with Ann Bullen ; and that, if we ourselves have not yet been persuaded by the arguments, either of the monk or the monarch, to relinquish the faith originally preached in this island, above 1300 years before their time, we are, at least, possessed of

common sense, virtuous principles, and *untainted loyalty.*

The writer might assign another reason for making the present publication; namely, the number and acrimony of his own public opponents on subjects of religion. To say nothing of the groundless charges, by word of mouth, of certain privileged personages, the following writers are some of those who have published books, pamphlets, essays, or notes against him, on subjects of a religious nature; the Deans of Winchester and Peterborough; Chancellor Sturges; Prebendary Poulter; the Doctors Hoadley, Ash, Ryan, Ledwich, Le Mesurier (1), and Elrington; Sir Rich-

(1) To one only objection of his adversaries the writer wishes here to give an answer, that of having *quoted falsely;* which, however, has been advanced by very few of them, and is confined, as far as he knows, to two instances. The first of these is that the writer in his *History of Winchester,* vol. i. p. 61, 'quotes Gildas, for the exploits of King Arthur, who never once mentions 'his name.' This objection was first started by Dr. O'Conor, in his *Columbanus,* was borrowed from him by the Rev. Mr. Le Mesurier, in his *Bampton Lectures,* and was adopted from the latter by the Rev. Mr. Grier, in his *Answer to Ward's Errata.*——After all, this pretended *forgery of the writer* will be found, on consulting the passage referred to above, to be nothing else but *a blunder of his critics;* since it will appear that he quotes William of Malmsbury for *the exploits* of Arthur and Gildas, barely for *the year* in which *one* of them, the battle of Mons Badonicus, took place! The second accusation of this nature was inserted by one of the above-named writers in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* namely, that the writer had advanced, *without any historical authority,* that James I. used to call November 5, '*Cecil's Holiday.*' In answer to this charge, he gave notice in the next number of the Magazine, that he had sent up to the Editor's office, as he had done, there to remain, during a month, for public inspection, Lord Castlemain's *Catholique Apology,* which contains the fact, and the authorities

ard Musgrave, John Reeves, Esq.; the Reverend Messrs. Williamson, Bazeley, Churton, Grier, and Roberts; besides numerous anonymous riflemen in the Gentleman's Magazine, the Monthly Magazine, the Antijacobin Review, the Protestant Advocate, the Antibiblion, and other periodical works, including newspapers. By some of these he has been challenged into the field of controversy, and when he did not appear there, he has been posted as a *coward.*

A still more cogent reason, my Lord, for the appearance of this work, which was heretofore suppressed, at the desire of a former Bishop of St. David's, has been furnished by his present successor, in the work the latter has lately published, called THE PROTESTANT's CATECHISM. This is no ordinary effusion of NO POPERY zeal. It was not called for by the increase of the Ancient Religion in his Lordship's diocese, which teems with Methodist Jumpers, to the danger of his Cathedral and Parish Churches being left quite empty; while not one Catholic family is, perhaps, to be found in it. It was not provoked by any late attempt on the Established Church, or on Protestantism in general; as the Bishop does not pretend that such thing has taken place. Nevertheless

on which it is advanced.—The writer is far from claiming inerrancy; but he should despise himself, if he knowingly published any falsehood, or hesitated to retract any one that he was proved to have fallen into.

he comes forward in his episcopal mitre, bearing in his hands a new *Protestant Catechism*, to be learnt by Protestants of every description, which teaches them to *hate* and *persecute* their elder brethren, the authors of their Christianity and civilization! In fact, this Christian Bishop begins and ends his *Protestant Catechism*, with a quotation from a Puritan Regicide, declaring, that '*Popery is not to be tolerated*, either in 'public or *in private*, and that *it must be thought how* '*to remove it*, and hinder the growth thereof:' adding, 'If they say that by removing their idols we violate their 'consciences, we have *no warrant to regard conscience* 'which is not grounded on Scripture (1).' This, your

(1) Milton's prose works, vol. 4. The prose writings of this Secretary of the Long Parliament are execrable, for their Regicide and Anti-prelatic principles, as his poetry is super-excellent for its sublimity and sweetness. Four other English authors are brought forward by the Bishop of St. David's, to justify that persecution of Catholics, which he recommends. The first of these is the Socinian Locke, who will not allow of Catholics being *tolerated* on the demonstrated false pretext that they cannot tolerate other Christians. The true cause was that his hands being stained by the blood of twenty innocent Catholics, who were immolated by the sanguinary policy of his master Shaftsbury, in Oates' infamous plot, he was obliged to find a pretext for excluding them from the legal toleration which he stood in need of himself.—Bishop Hoadley, who had no religion at all of his own, would not allow the Catholics to enjoy theirs, because, he says; 'No oaths and solemn assur-'ances, no regard to truth, justice, or honour, can restrain them.' This is the hypocritical plea for intolerance of a man, who was in the constant habit of violating all his oaths and engagements to a Church which had raised him to rank and fortune, and who systematically pursued its degradation into his own Anti-Christian Socinianism, by professed *deceit* and *treachery*, as will be seen in the Letters.——Blackstone, being a crown lawyer, and writing when the penal laws were in force, could not but defend

Lordship must know, is the genuine cant of a Mar-Preate Independent; the same cant which brought Laud, and Charles I. to the block; the same cant which overthrew the Church and State in the Grand Rebellion. But what chiefly concerns my present purpose in this the Bishop's twice repeated quotation from Milton, is to observe that it breathes the whole persecuting spirit of the sixteenth century, and calls for the fines and forfeitures, dungeons and halters, and knives of Elizabeth's reign, against the devoted Catholics; since it is evident that the *Idolatry of Popery*, as it is termed, exercised *in private*, cannot *be removed* without such persecuting and sanguinary measures. The same thing is plain from the nature of the different legal offences which the Right Reverend Prelate lays to their charge. In one place he accuses the Catholics of England and Ireland, that is to say, more than a quarter of his Majesty's European subjects, of 'acknowledging the jurisdiction of the Pope 'in *defiance of the laws*, and of the *allegiance due to*

them: but, Judge as he was, and writing at the above-mentioned time, he in the passage following that quoted by Dr. Burgess, expressed a hope, that the time 'was not distant, when the fears of a Pretender having vanished, 'and the influence of the Pope becoming feeble, the rigorous edicts against 'the Catholics would be revised,' b. iv. c. 4.; which event accordingly soon took place. As to Burke, the last author whom the Bishop quotes against Catholic emancipation, it is evident, from his speech at Bristol, his letter to Lord Kenmare, and the whole tenor of his conduct, that he was not only a warm friend, but, in some degree, a martyr to it.

'*their rightful Sovereign*:' though he well knows, that they have abjured the Pope's jurisdiction in *all civil and temporal cases*, which is all that the King, Lords and Commons required of them, in their acts of 1791 and 1793. Again the Prelate describes their opposition to the *Veto* (though equally opposed in the appointment of their respective Pastors by all Protestant Dissenters, who constitute more than another fourth part of his Majesty's subjects), as '*Treasonable by Statute*,' p. 35. Now, every one knows that the legal punishment of a subject, acting in *defiance of his allegiance*, and contracting the guilt of *treason*, is nothing less than *death*. Nay; so much bent on the persecution of Catholics is this modern Bishop, as to arraign Parliament itself as guilty of *a breach of the Constitution*, by the latter of the above-mentioned tolerating Acts; where he says: 'If the elective franchise be really *inconsistent with* '*the Constitutional Statutes* of the Revolution; *it* '*ought to be repealed*, like all other concessions, that 'are *injurious to loyalty and religion*.'—He adds, 'But it does not follow that because Parliament had 'been *guilty of one act of prodigality*, that it should 'therefore, like a thoughtless and *unprincipled spend-* '*thrift*, plunge itself into inextricable ruin,' pp. 53, 54. Thus, my Lord, though the Prelate alluded to, after advertising, in his Table of Contents, A

CONCLUSION, shewing, 'the means of co-operating 'with the laws for preventing the danger and in-'crease of Popery,' when he comes to the proper place for inserting it, apologises for *deferring its publication*, as 'being connected with the *credit of the* '*Ecclesiastical Establishment*,' yet, we see, as clearly, from the substance and drift of *the Protestant's Catechism*, what his Conclusion is, as if he had actually published it; namely, he would have the whole code of penal laws, with all their incapacities, fines, imprisonment, hanging, drawing, and quartering re-enacted, to prevent even the *private practice of idolatry;* and he would have the Bishops, Clergy, Churchwardens, and Constables employed in enforcing them, according to the forms of Inquisition, prescribed by the Canons of 1597, 1603, and 1640.

Before the writer passes from the present subject of loyalty and the laws, to others more congenial with his studies, and those of the Prelate, he wishes to submit to your Lordship's reflection two or three questions connected with it. First: is it strictly legal, even for a Lord of Parliament, and is it edifying for a Bishop to instruct the public, especially in these days of insubordination and commotion, that the reigning King, and the two Houses of Parliament, have acted against the Constitutional Statutes, by affording religious relief to a large and loyal portion of British sub-

jects; as King William, George I. and George II. had afforded it to other portions of them? We all know what outcries are continually raised about violating the Constitution, and we know what effect these are intended to produce: now if a turbulent populace are made to believe, that the present Legislature has acted *illegally* and *unconstitutionally* in some of its acts, is there no danger that they may form the same notion concerning some of its other acts, which are peculiarly obnoxious to them, and that they may rank these among the *Fictitious Statutes*, as this Prelate terms the *Acts of Parliament* of three former reigns?—Secondly: the writer wishes to ask your Lordship, whether or no you think it is for the peace and safety of the sister isle, to alarm the bulk of its inhabitants with the threat of their being dispossessed of the elective franchise, which they have now enjoyed for a quarter of a century? In like manner, is it conducive to this important end, for a person of his Lordship's character and consequence to assure this people, that the Pope's jurisdiction and England's dominion over them 'were introduced into Ire-'land by the mercenary compact of the Pope and Henry 'II.' p. 24, 'founded on a fiction of the grossest kind, 'the pretended donation of Constantine,' p. v. though, by the bye, this was never once mentioned or hinted at by either of the parties?—Lastly: the writer would be glad to be informed by your Lordship, whether it

is for the advantage of the Established Church so highly to extol John Wickliffe, who maintained that Clergymen ought to have no sort of temporal possessions? And is it for the security of the State to hold up Lord Cobham as 'a great and good man, and the 'martyr of Protestantism,' p. vii. (1), who was convicted in the King's Bench, and in open Parliament, of raising an insurrection of 20,000 men, for the purpose of killing the King and his brother, and the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and who was executed for the same, merely because he was a *Wickliffite?* How innocent was Colonel Despard, compared with Sir John Oldcastle, called Lord Cobham!

The writer has spoken of the object of the publication which has lately appeared, under the name of a Rt. Rev. Bishop of the Established Church: he now proceeds to say something of its contents.

It professes to be THE PROTESTANT'S CATECHISM. From this title, most people will suppose it to be *an elementary book, for the instruction of Protestants of every description in the doctrine and morality taught by Jesus Christ:* but not a word can the writer find in it about Christ, or God, or any *doctrinal* matter whatever; except that, 'They, who do not hold the

(1) See Walsingham's Historia Major. Knighton Leicest. Collier's Eccles. Hist. Stow, &c.

'worship of the Church of Rome to be idolatrous, are 'not Protestants, whatever they may profess to be,' p. 46.; which is a sentence of excommunication against many of the brightest lights and chief ornaments of the Bishop's own Church. Nor does this novel Catechism contain any moral or practical lesson; except that 'Every member of Parliament's con-'science is pledged against the Catholic claims;' and, what has been mentioned before, that as 'Popery is 'idolatrous, it is *not to be tolerated*, either in public or in '*private*,' and that 'it must be now thought how to re-'move it,' p. 3. Had the Catechism appeared without a name, it might be supposed to be a posthumous work of Lord George Gordon; but, had its origin been traced to the mountains of Wales, it would certainly be attributed to some itinerant Jumper, rather than to a successor of St. Dubritius and St. David. What, however, chiefly distinguishes *The Protestant Catechism* from other *No-Popery* publications, is, not so much the strength of its acrimony, as the boldness of its paradoxes. These, for themost part, stand in contradiction to all ancient records, and modern authors, Protestant as well as Catholic, being supported by the bare word of the Bishop of St. David's: and what is still more extraordinary, they sometimes stand in contradiction to the word of the Bishop of St. David's

himself; resting in this case, on the word of Dr. Thomas Burgess, I purpose exhibiting a few of the paradoxes I refer to.

The great and fundamental paradox of the Right Rev. *Catechist* is, that Protestantism subsisted many hundred years *before Popery;* at the same time that he makes its essence consist in *a renunciation of and opposition to Popery!* for his Lordship lectures his Protestant pupils in the following manner: 'Question. 'What is Protestantism? Answer. The abjuration of 'Popery and the exclusion of Papists from all power 'ecclesiastical and civil.' P. 12. 'Question. What is 'Popery? Answer. The Religion of the Church of 'Rome, so called because the Church of Rome is sub-'ject to the jurisdiction of the Pope.' P. 11. Q. When 'was this jurisdiction assumed over the whole Church? 'A. At the beginning of the seventh century.' P. 15. The writer does not here refute the various errors of the Right Rev. Bishop on these heads: this refutation will be found in the following letters; he barely exhibits one of the Bishop's leading paradoxes.—It may be here stated as another very favourite parodox of the Prelate, since he has maintained it in a former work, that, because Venantius Fortunatus, a poet of the sixth century sings that 'the *stylus* or writings of St. Paul had run East, West, North, and South, and passed into Britain and the remote Thule,' and because Theo-

doret, an author of the fifth century, says that, 'St. 'Paul brought salvation to the islands in the sea,' (namely, Malta and Sicily, *Acts* xxviii.) it follows that the British Church was *founded* by St. Paul! p. 19. (1). This paradox might be stated and even granted for any thing it makes in favour of the Bishop's object, which is to invalidate the supremacy of Saint Peter. For it matters not which Apostle founded this Church or that Church, while it is evident, from the words of Christ in St. Matthew c. xvi. v. 18, and in other texts; and, from the concurring testimony of the Fathers and all antiquity, that Christ built the whole Church on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, he himself being the chief corner stone, so as still to ground it, next after himself, on the *Rock*, Peter (2). This will be found demonstrated in the following work: Letter xlvi.—A third paradox of the Prelatic *Catechist* is this: Having undertaken to prove that 'The Church 'of Rome was founded by St. Paul,' p. 13, no less than

(1) The falsity of this inference and the weakness and unfairness of the Bishop's arguments on the whole subject, have been well exposed by an able and learned writer, The Rev. John Lingard, in his *Examination of Certain Opinions advanced by the Rev. Dr. Burgess, &c.* 1813. Syers, Manchester; Keating and Brown, London.

(2) The Right Rev. Prelate seems to have been forced out of his former cavil concerning the difference of gender between Πετρος and Πετρα in the text, Matt. xvi. by a learned colleague of his [Landaff from remote ages was a thorn in the side of Menevia] who has shewn him that Christ did not speak Greek but Syriac, and on this occasion, made use of the word *Cephas, Rock*, which admits of no variation of genders.

the Church of Britain, he attempts to draw an argument *from their different discipline* in the observance of Easter; that the latter was 'independent' of the former, p. 23. Hence it would follow that St. Paul established *one* discipline, that which the Prelate himself now follows, at Rome, and *another*, 'that of the 'Church of Ephesus and the Eastern Churches, in 'Britain,' p. 17. The truth is, his Lordship has quite bewildered himself in the ancient controversy about the right time of keeping Easter. He will learn, however, from the following letters, that the British Church originally agreed with that of Rome, in this, no less than in the other points, as the Emperor Constantine expressly declares in his letter on that subject (1), and as farther appears by the Acts of the Council of Arles, which the British Bishops, there present, joined with the rest in subscribing. And when, after the Saxon invasion, the British Churches got into a wrong computation, they did not follow that of the Asiatic Quarto-decimans, but always kept Easter-day on a Sunday, differing from the practice of the Continent only once in seven years.—A fourth paradox of the Catechism maker, is, that, admitting, as he does, the existence of our Christian King, Lucius, in the second century, he, nevertheless, rejects his conversion by the missionaries of Pope Eleutherius, Fugatius and Duvi-

(1) Euseb. Vit. Constant. L. iii. c. 19.

anus, as 'a mere Romish fiction and a monkish fable,' p. 23; notwithstanding both facts rest on exactly the same authority, namely, that of all the original writers, British, Saxon, English, Roman, and Gallic (1). A fifth paradox of the Bishop's is, that 'The 'British Churches were Protestant before they were 'Popish,' p. 23; 'six centuries elapsed before Popery 'had any footing in this island,' p. 28; and that 'the 'British Bishops shewed their independence of the 'Pope's authority by rejecting the overtures of Aus-'tin, and by refusing to acknowledge any authority 'but that of their own metropolitan,' p. 24. And yet it is demonstrated that the British Bishops were present, not only at the Councils of Arles and Nice, which acknowledged the Pope's authority, but also at that of Sardica in Illyrium, held in 347 (2), where the right of appeal to the Pope in all Ecclesiastical causes from every part of the world was confirmed (3). It is equally certain that in the former part of the following century, Pope Celestine sent St. Paladius to convert the Scots, St. Patrick to convert the Irish, and St. Germanus to reclaim such Britons as had fallen into

(1) Nennius' Hist. Briton, c. xviii. Girald. Cambr. De Jur. Menev. P. ii. Angl. Sac. p. 541. Silvest. Girald. Camb. Descript. c. xviii. The Ancient Register of Landaff, quod Teilo vocatur. Angl. Sacra, vol. ii. Gildas Historicus, quoted by Rudborn. Galfrid Monumet. Ven. Bede, L. i. c. 4. The Saxon Chronicle. Gul. Malm. Antiq. Glaston. Martyr. Rom. Raderus, &c. &c.

(2) St. Athan. Apolog. 2. See also Usher. (3) Can. iii.

the Pelagian heresy (1). Each of these facts is expressly affirmed by a contemporary author of the highest character, St. Prosper; and the last mentioned fact is conformable to the British records, which represent this foreign Bishop, as exercising high acts of jurisdiction in Britain, which he never could have exercised but in virtue of the Papal Supremacy, of which he and his companion, St. Lupus, Bishop of Treves, were the delegates; such as consecrating Bishops in different parts of the island, and constituting St. Dubritius Archbishop of the *Right Side of it*, or of Wales (2). But how many other proofs of the dependency of the ancient British Church on the See of Rome has not our Episcopal Antiquary met with in his own favourite author and predecessor, Giraldus Cambrensis (3), especially where the latter gives an account of his pleading before the Pope for the Archiepiscopal dignity of St.

(1) St. Prosper. 'Papa Celestinus Germanum Antisidorensem Episcopum, VICE SUA mittit, et deturbatis hæreticis, Britannos ad Catholicam fidem dirigit.' Chron. ad An. 429. See also Archbish. Usher. De Brit. Eccl. Prim.

(2) 'Postquam prædicti Seniores (Germanus et Lupus) Pelagianam hæresim extirpaverant; Episcopos in pluribus locis Britanniæ Insulæ consecraverunt. Super omnes autem Britannos dextralis partis Britanniæ B. Dubritium, summum Doctorem, a Rege et ab omni parochiâ electum, Archiepiscopum consecraverunt.' Ex Antiq. Eccl. Landav. Registro. Angl. Sacr. P. ii. p. 667.

(3) The New Biographical Dictionary divides Silvester Giraldus Cambrensis into two different persons, whereas, it is plain, from this author's Description of Wales, p. 882, Edit. Cambden, that these three names belong to one and the same author.

David's, which the latter asserted was formerly decorated even with the *Pallium*, the mark of Papal legatine jurisdiction; till one of his predecessors, Sampson, as he asserted, flying into Britanny, transferred it to Dol? He maintained, however, that, excepting the use of the Pallium, the Church of St. David possessed the whole Metropolitical dignity, and was 'subject to no 'other Church *except that of Rome*, and to that *im-* '*mediately* (1).' The modern Prelate does but add to the wonder of his learned readers by appealing to the conference between St. Austin, Pope Gregory's Missionary and Legate in England, and the Welsh Bishops, A. D. 502, and to the latters 'rejecting the overtures' of the former, in proof of their 'rejecting the Pope's 'authority,' p. 24. For, what were these overtures? They were these three: that they, the Welsh Bishops, would keep Easter at the right time; that they would adopt the Roman Ritual in the administration of Baptism; and that they would join with the Roman Missionaries in preaching the word of God to the Pagan

(1) 'Usque ad Anglorum Regem Henricum I. totam Metropoliticam dig- 'nitatem, præter usum Pallii, Ecclesia Menevensis obtinuit; nulli Ecclesiæ 'prorsus, *nisi Romanæ tantum*, et illi *immediate*, sicut nec Ecclesia Scotica, 'subjectionem debens.' De Jur. Menev. Ecc. Angl. Sac. P. ii. p. 541.—The Rival See of Landaff bears equal testimony to the Supremacy of Rome. 'Sicut Romana Ecclesia excedit dignitatem omnium Ecclesiarum Catholicæ 'fidei, ita Ecclesia illa Landavia excedit omnes Ecclesias totius dextralis Britanniæ.' Ex Antiq. Regist. Landav. Angl. Sac. P. ii. p. 669.

English (1). This last overture demonstrates, that neither on the two former points, nor on any other point, and least of all on that of the Pope's Supremacy, was there, in the opinion of St. Austin, any difference, of essential consequence, between his doctrine and that of the Welsh Bishops. For, if there had been such a difference, and especially if they had denied the Supremacy of his master, the Pope, would he have invited and even pressed them to join with him in preaching the Gospel to his new and increasing flock in England? As well may we believe that a faithful shepherd, would collect together and turn into his fold a number of hungry wolves! It is true they then said, they would not receive St. Augustin for their *Archbishop* (2): but neither did he nor the Pope require them to do so; nor is the vindication of the rights of an ancient Church, at any time, a denial of the Pope's general Supremacy. So far from this, within two years from the holding of that conference, we find Oudoceus, Bishop of Landaff, going to Canterbury to receive consecration from the same St. Austin, and we find him received, on his return into Wales, by the King, Princes, Clergy and People, with the highest honour (3).

(1) 'Ut genti Anglorum una nobiscum prædicetis verbum Domini.' Bed. Eccl. Hist. L. ii. c. 2.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Vita Oudocei, quoted by Godwin De Præsul, and Usher.

We have, moreover, the testimony of the above quoted British Register, that the Bishops of Landaff, from this period, were always subject and obedient to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was at all times the Pope's Legate.——The Right Rev. Bishop's argument to prove that the Irish Church was not, anciently, in communion with the Church of Rome, namely, because it was in communion with the British Bishops, p. 24, is as great a paradox as any of the above-mentioned; since it has been proved that the British Bishops themselves were always in communion with the Church of Rome. Of the same description are the assertions, that no legate was appointed by the Pope in Ireland 'before Gillebert in the twelfth century,' and that 'the Pope's jurisdiction was first introduced into 'Ireland by the mercenary compact of the Pope and 'Henry II.' p. 25. To expose the inconsistency of these assertions nothing more is necessary than to consult the *Antiquities* of Usher himself, on whose authority they are said to be grounded. This Protestant Archbishop, then, testifies from ancient records, which he cites, that first St. Palladius, and after him St. Patrick, was sent into Ireland by Pope Celestine, to convert its inhabitants from Pagan Idolatry; the former in 431, the latter in 432; that St. Patrick 'having es-'tablished the Church of Ireland and ordained Bishops 'and Priests throughout the whole island, went to

'Rome, in 462, where he procured from Pope Hilary 'the confirmation of whatever he had done in Ireland, 'together with the Pallium and the title of *Pope's Le-* '*gate* (1);' that in 540 the celebrated St. Finan, of Clonard, having spent seven years at Rome, and being consecrated Bishop, returned into Ireland, where he instituted schools and convents, one of which contained 3000 monks (2). It appears from the same annalist, that in 580 the renowned St. Columban passed from Ireland to the Continent, where he was protected by different Bishops and Princes, for his orthodoxy and piety, and even by the Popes themselves with whom he corresponded; that in 630 a deputation was sent from Ireland, of learned and holy men 'to the foun- 'tain of their baptism, like children to their mo- 'ther (3),' namely, to the Apostolic See of Rome, to consult with it on matters of religion; that among these was St. Lasrean, who was consecrated Bishop by Pope Honorius, and appointed his *Legate in Ireland* (4); that in 640 Tomianus and four other Bishops, being still anxious about the right observance of Easter, and about the Pelagian heresy, wrote to

(1) Usher's Antiq. Index Chronol. (2) Usher Primord. (3) Usher.

(4) Gillebert was succeeded in the Legatine Office by St. Malachy, who by a special authority erected the See of Tuam into an Archbishopric. After his death Cardinal Papario was sent by Pope Eugenius III. into Ireland, namely, in 1151, with four Palliums for the four Archbishoprics. So false is the Prelate's account of the origin of the Pope's Jurisdiction in Ireland!

consult Pope Severinus, and that they received an answer to their letter from his successor Pope John.—Numerous other testimonies, not only of the *communion* of the Church of Ireland with that of Rome, but also of its *acknowledging the Pope's Supremacy*, may be collected from Usher, Ware, and other Protestant, no less than from the original Catholic writers, down to the very time of Gillebert, Bishop of Limerick, whom the Catechist admits to have been the Pope's Legate in Ireland. This happened, according to Usher, in 1130, twenty-five years before the date of what the Catechist calls 'the mercenary compact of the Pope and Henry 'II. by which,' he says, 'the Pope's Jurisdiction was '*first* introduced into Ireland,' and forty years before the latter invaded Ireland; which island, after all, as every child knows, he invaded, not as the executor of Pope Adrian's legacy, but as the ally of the dethroned King, Dermot.

In speaking of the beginning and progress of the Religion of our own ancestors, the English, it might be expected the Right Rev. Catechist would have paid more attention to truth and consistency than he has done with respect to the foregoing more obscure histories. This, however, is not the case. But, previously to the writer's entering on this particular subject, he wishes to observe what is more fully demonstrated in the following work, that the Catechist, totally mis-

represents our Apostle, Pope Gregory the Great, as having 'reprobated the Spiritual Supremacy,' and also 'his successor Boniface as being the first Pope to as-'sume it,' p. 16. In short, the question, at issue, is not concerning the *title*, but the *power* of a head Bishop; which power, as it will appear below, no Pope exercised more frequently or extensively than 'the learned and 'virtuous St. Gregory,' to use the Prelate's own epithets. His Lordship does not deny that our ancestors, the Anglo-Saxons, were converted to Christianity by 'the 'Pope's Missionaries,' p. 28, namely, by St. Austin and his companions, sent hither by the above-mentioned Pope Gregory, in 597; nor does he contradict the account of our venerable historian, Bede, who describes the whole jurisdiction and discipline of our Church, as being regulated by that Pope and his successors. Still the Prelate most paradoxically denies that 'the Pope ever exercised jurisdiction in England 'or Ireland, except during the four centuries before 'the Reformation!' p. 11; and he maintains, in particular, that 'the Anglo-Saxon Churches differed from 'the Church of Rome in their objection to Image wor-'shipping, the Invocation of Saints, Transubstantiation, 'and other errors,' p. 28. Here are two paradoxes to be refuted; one concerning the *spiritual power*, the other concerning the *doctrine* of the See of Rome. With respect to the former: is it not a fact, my Lord,

known to every ecclesiastical antiquary, that each one of our Primates, from St. Austin down to Stigand, exclusively, who was deposed soon after the Conquest, either went to Rome to fetch, or had transmitted to him from Rome, the emblem and jurisdiction of legatine authority, by which he held and exercised the power of a Metropolitan over his suffragan Bishops? An original author, Radulph Diceto, exhibits a succinct but clear demonstration of this, in a series of all the Archbishops, and a list of the different Popes, from whom the former respectively received the Pallium. Did not St. Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, appeal to the Pope from the uncanonical sequestration of his diocese by the Primate Theodore? Did not Offa, the powerful Mercian King, engage Pope Adrian to transfer six suffragan Bishoprics from the See of Canterbury to that of Lichfield, constituting it, at the same time, an Archbishopric? A hundred other instances of the exercise of the Pope's ecclesiastical jurisdiction in England, previously to the Conquest, could be produced, if they were wanted.—As to the pretended difference between the *doctrine* of the Anglo-Saxons and the Church of Rome, the Catechist was bound to inform his readers when it took place; and who were the authors of it; that is, who first persuaded the whole English nation to reject the Religion they had been taught by their Apostles, Pope Gregory and

his Missionaries; and whether this change was effected by slow degrees, or all of a sudden (1). If so absurd a paradox, as the above-mentioned, required a serious refutation, it might be stated that, in 610, Bishop Melitus, who afterwards became Primate, went to Rome to obtain the Pope's confirmation of certain regulations which had been made in England, that he subscribed to the Acts of an Episcopal Synod, then held in that city, which Acts he brought back with him to England (2), and that, in 680, St. Wilfrid, going to Rome, to prosecute his appeal, was present at a Council of 125 Bishops, where, 'In the name of all the Churches 'in the North Part of Britain, Ireland, and the nations 'of the Scots and Picts, he made open profession of

(1) To make some brief confutation of each of the Catechist's alledged differences between the Anglo-Saxon Church and that of Rome: Bede testifies, that when St. Austin and his fellow Missionaries preached the Gospel to King Ethelbert, they carried a cross for their ensign with a painted picture of Christ, L. i. c. 25. Will. Malmsb. mentions that, among other pious images, preserved at Glastonbury, were those of Christ and his Apostles, made of silver and given by King Ina. De Antiq. Glaston. We learn from Archbishop Cuthred's letter to Lullus, successor of St. Boniface, Bishop and Martyr of Mentz, that a Synod of Anglo-Saxon Bishops had chosen this Saint, and St. Gregory, and St. Austin, to be their 'patrons and intercessors.' Inter Epist. Bonif. That our ancestors believed in Transubstantiation, is clear, from Osbern's relation of Archbishop Odo's rendering this visible. Angl. Sac. P. ii. p. 82. One of his successors, Lanfrank, was the principal defender of this doctrine against Berengarius. It may be added, that the original faith concerning Purgatory, the Mass, and, perhaps, every other controverted point can be proved from Bede's History alone.

(2) Bede, L. ii. c. 4.

'the true Catholic Faith, confirming it also by his 'subscription (1).'

Other paradoxes of the Right Rev. Prelate, relating to matters of a later date, are these, that Pope Adrian IV. grounded his right to give away Ireland on 'the 'forged donation of Constantine,' though he never once alluded to it, but assigned quite other grounds for what he did; and that 'the Pope now owes the 'whole of his temporal and spiritual power on the 'Continent, to this gross fiction, and the Decretal 'Epistles,' p. v. Alas! what must the learned Catholics of the Continent, who were the first to detect these literary frauds of the eighth century, and to trace them to the place of their birth in Lower Germany, think of the literature of this country, when they hear a Bishop, and a member of our learned Societies, telling them that they would not acknowledge the Pope to be Prince of Rome or Head of the Church, were it not for those spurious pieces! A similar paradox is, that 'The Popish 'Bishops and Popish Clergy were the real authors of '*the fictitious statutes* (Acts of Parliament) of Richard 'II. Henry IV. and Henry V.' against the Lollards; though they neither did, nor were permitted, to interfere in those Acts; and though it is notorious from all contemporary history, that these severe edicts were

(1) Bede, L. v. c. 20.

occasioned by what that anarchical faction had done and threatened to do. They had, under the command of Wat Tyler, and John Ball, a Wickliffite Priest, *actually* put to death, by public execution, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer, and the Lord Chief Justice of England: and they had *threatened* to kill the King, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and all the *pen and ink-horn-men*, as they called the lawyers; as also to put down all the Clergy, except the begging Friars, and to divide among themselves all their lands and property (1). Such were the levellers of the fifteenth century, whom a modern Bishop eulogizes.—The following are Theological Paradoxes, being such as will infallibly non-plus every *regular* student in Divinity. 1st. 'The Apostles were not Bishops,' p. 15. By the same rule Bishops are not Priests.—2dly. 'To 'retain the *obsolete language* of ancient Rome, in 'prayer, is *an error*,' p. 39.—3dly. The Irish were 'guilty of *a heresy of discipline!*' p. 60.

But the political paradoxes, my Lord, of this new Catechism are still more inexplicable than the theological ones. The first of them, which I shall mention, is contained in the following question and answer. 'Q. What is it excludes Pagans, Jews, and Mahome-'tans from our Churches, and from Parliament? A.

(1) Hist. Major T. Walsingham. Knighton De Event. Angl. Collier's Eccl. Hist.

'Religion,' p. 44.—Your Lordship will permit the writer to observe, in the first place, that it is impossible either for the simple Catechumens of Wales, or even for the learned Reviewers of England, to gather from this passage, whether the Rt. Rev. Prelate means to say, that it is the Religion of *Pagans, Jews, and Turks,* or that of *Protestants*, which excludes the former from Parliament, for example: nevertheless, the passage taken either way, is perfectly paradoxical. For can that Prelate, or any one else, cite a precept of the Vedam, or the Talmud, or the Koran, which prohibits its respective votaries from sitting and voting in the British Parliament, if they can get entrance into it? Or can he shew any thing in *Protestantism* (which he defines to be 'The abjuration of Popery, and the exclusion of Papists from all power, ecclesiastical or civil)' that prevents a man, who publicly proclaims Mahomet, or who publicly denies Jesus Christ, or who publicly worships the obscene and blood-stained idol Juggernaut, from being a member of either House of the Legislature? No, my Lord, there is no one article in any one of these Religions, if they may be called so, which excludes them from our Parliament; the only condition for rendering them fit and worthy to enter into it, and becoming legislators, being their *calling God to witness,* that 'there is no Transubstantiation in the 'Mass,' and that 'the *worship of the Virgin Mary*

'and the Saints, as practised in the Church of Rome, '(upon both which points the worshippers of 'Juggernaut and English Protestants are, for the 'most part, equally well instructed), are *idola-* '*trous!*'———A second political paradox in this Catechism is, that 'the inviolable covenants of the two 'Unions shew the injustice and unconstitutional na- 'ture of the Roman Catholic claims,' p. viii. This, my Lord, is equally incomprehensible; since the Act of Union with Scotland neither mentions these claims, nor alludes to them; and since that of the Union with Ireland expressly admits the principle of their being conceded, and prepares the minds of men, for their actual concession; as it is therein enacted, that 'Mem- 'bers of the United Parliament shall take and subscribe 'the usual oaths and declarations UNTIL THE SAID 'PARLIAMENT SHALL OTHERWISE PRO- 'VIDE.' Art. IV.——The last of these paradoxes, which the writer will extract from the incomprehensible Catechism, is the following. It teaches at page 35, that 'Not to consent to the *Veto*, is not to ac- 'knowledge the *King's Supremacy*, which it is *treason-* '*able*, by Statute, to oppose.' And immediately after, at p. 36, it teaches that '*the Veto*, or the King's nomina- 'tion, is *unprotestant* and *illegal:*' to which the Bishop adds, in the words of his friend, Mr. Sharp; 'it is 'highly improper and even *illegal* for the Crown of

'England to *accept* the power of the proposed *Veto;* 'or to have *any concern in the appointment* of *unre-* '*formed Bishops,*' p. 56. Can any one, my Lord, reconcile these opposite doctrines? To the plain sense of the writer it appears, that if it be *illegal* for his Majesty to *accept of the Veto,* it would be *criminal* in the Catholics *to offer it* to him; so far from its being *treasonable* to refuse giving it!

MY LORD BISHOP,

The wise man has said, in the Sacred Text, *of making many books there is no end,* Eccles. xii. 12.; and we are certain, from reason and experience, that, least of all, will there be an end of making books, and disputing on subjects of Religion, with respect to those who have no fixed rule, or none but a false one, for deciding on religious controversies, or who suffer worldly interest, pride, or the prejudices of education, to take place of the sincerity, humility and piety, which ought to guide them in a matter of such infinite moment. The writer trusts that, in the *First Part* of the following Letters he has shewn the *Rule,* appointed by Christ, for clearly discerning the truths he has revealed, and, which conducts to the same end; that he has, in his *Second Part,* clearly pointed out Christ's *True Church,* which cannot but teach his *True Doctrine.* With men of *good will,* who follow either of these ways in the uprightness and fervour of their

souls, a satisfactory end to their religious discussions and doubts will quickly be found. But who can subdue or soften the above-mentioned passions and prejudices? No one, certainly, but God alone; and, as the greater part of mankind is notoriously under their influence, the writer is so far from expecting to make these persons proselytes to his demonstrations, that he has prepared his mind for the opposition and obloquy, which he is sure to experience from them. He is aware, that most Statesmen, and other great personages, regard Religion merely as a political engine, for managing the population, and therefore, wish to keep one as well as the other as quiet as possible. On this principle, had they been counsellors to King Ethelbert, they would have persuaded him to banish St. Austin, and to continue the worship of Thor and Woden. The multitude, in this age of infidelity and dissipation, nauseate religious inquiries and instructions; and, when they must hear them, like the Jews of old; *they say to the Seer, see not; and to the Prophet, prophesy not to us right things: speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits,* Isai. xxx. 10. The Critics and Reviewers are, for the most part, as *smooth,* in this repect, as the prophets: if they lead the public opinion in matters of less consequence, they follow it in those of greater.—But whatever *excuse* there may be for the inconsistency of other men, in religious

matters, there would, evidently, be none for persons of your Lordship's and the writer's profession and situation, should they, for their temporal advantage, or their prejudices, mislead others in a matter of eternal consequence. Such conduct would be hypocritical, and doubly perfidious and ruinous. It would be *perfidious* to the individuals so misguided, and to the Church or Sect which they profess to serve; since nothing can injure that so much, as the appearance of insincerity and human passions in its official defenders. Accordingly it will be seen, in the following work, that the most fruitful source of conversions to the Catholic Church, are the detected calumnies and misrepresentations of her bitterest enemies. Such conduct would also be utterly *ruinous*: first, to its immediate victims; and, secondly, to the persons of your Lordship's and the writer's profession and character. In fact, my Lord, if, as Christ assures us, at the great day of universal trial, some of the arraigned will *rise up in judgment* against others, *and condemn them* for their peculiar guilt, *Matt.* xii. 41.; how heavy a condemnation will poor bewildered souls call down upon those faithless guides, who have led them astray! Or rather, how severe a vengeance will the *Good Shepherd* himself (then also the Judge of the living and the dead) *who hath laid down his life for his sheep,* take of those hirelings, who have not only *left his sheep to be caught and*

scattered by the wolf, but have themselves, *killed and destroyed them!* John x.

For all these important motives, let us, my Lord, dismiss every selfish interest, human respect, and prejudice from our minds, in the discussion of religious subjects, and follow *Truth*, whithersoever she leads us, with the utmost sincerity and ardour of our souls. The writer of this, for his part, disgusted, as he is, at seeing the most serious and sacred of all subjects become a mere field of exercise for the talents, the learning, and the passions of different writers, and averse, as he is, from taking a part in such contests, nevertheless holds himself bound, not only *to render an account of the hope that is in him, to every one who asketh it of him*, in the sincerity of an upright heart, but also to yield the palm to your Lordship thankfully and publicly, should you be able to prove (not, however, by extravagant and unsupported assertions, but by sound and convincing theological arguments) that the Rule of Faith, which he maintains, is not the one appointed by Christ and his Apostles, for guiding Christians into all truth; or that the Church, to which he adheres, has not exclusively those marks of the True Church, which your Lordship ascribes to it, in the Creeds you repeat, equally with the writer. Until one or other of these points is proved, he will hold himself bound to stick close both to the Rule and the Church, in

spite of calumny, misrepresentation, ridicule, clamour, and persecution, and to maintain, in opposition to your Lordship, that there is no just cause for either making or continuing any penal laws against the professors of the Original Faith.

The writer has the honour to remain,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,

J. M. D.D.

W——, May 3, 1818.

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END

OF

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

LETTER I.

From JAMES BROWN, Esq. to the Rev. J. M. D.D. F. S. A.

INTRODUCTION.

New Cottage, near Cressage, Salop, Oct. 13, 1801.

REVEREND SIR,

I SHOULD need an ample apology for the liberty I take in thus addressing you, without having the honour of your acquaintance, and still more for the heavy task I am endeavouring to impose upon you, if I did not consider your public character, as a Pastor of your Religion, and as a writer in defence of it, and likewise your personal character for benevolence, which has been described to me by a Gentleman of your communion, Mr. J. C—ne, who is well acquainted with us both. Having mentioned this, I need only add, that I write to you in the name of a society of serious and worthy Christians of different persuasions, to which I myself belong, who are as de-

sirous as I am, to receive satisfaction from you on certain doubts, which your late work in answer to Dr. Sturges has suggested to us. (1)

However, in making this request of our Society to you, it seems proper, Rev. Sir, that I should bring you acquainted with the nature of it, by way of convincing you, that it is not unworthy of the attention, which I am desirous you should pay to it. We consist then of above twenty persons, including the Ladies, who, living at some distance from any considerable town, meet together once a week, generally at my habitation of New Cottage, not so much for our amusement and refection, as for the improvement of our minds, by reading the best publications of the day which I can procure from my London Bookseller, and sometimes an original essay written by one of the company.

I have signified that many of us are of different religious persuasions: this will be seen more distinctly from the following account of our members. Among these I must mention, in the first place, our above-named learned and worthy Rector, Dr. Carey. He is, of course, of the Church of England; but like most others of his learned and dignified brethren, in these times, he is of that free, and as it is called, liberal turn of mind, as to explain away the mysteries and a

(1) *Letters to a Prebendary*, in answer to *Reflections on Popery*, by the Rev. Dr. Sturges, *Prebendary and Chancellor of Winchester.*

great many of its other articles, which, in my younger days, were considered essential to it. Mr. and Mrs. Topham are Methodists of the Predestinarian and Antinomian class, while Mr. and Mrs. Askew are mitigated Arminian Methodists of Wesley's connection. Mr. and Mrs. Rankin are honest Quakers. Mr. Barker and his children term themselves *Rational Dissenters*, being of the old Presbyterian lineage, which is now almost universally gone into Socinianism. I, for my part, glory in being a stanch member of our happy Establishment, which has kept the golden mean among the contending sects, and which I am fully persuaded, approaches nearer to the purity of the Apostolic Church than any other which has existed since the age of it. Mrs. Brown professes an equal attachment to the Church; yet, being of an inquisitive and ardent mind, she cannot refrain from frequenting the meetings, and even supporting the missions of those self-created apostles, who are undermining this Church on every side, and who are no where more active than in our sequestered valley.

With these differences among us, on the most interesting of all subjects, we cannot help having frequent religious controversies: but reason and charity enable us to manage these without any breach of either good manners, or good will to each other. Indeed, I believe that we are, one and all, possessed of an

unfeigned respect and cordial love for Christians of every description, one only excepted. Must I name it on the present occasion?—Yes, I must; in order to fulfil my commission in a proper manner. It is then the Church that you, Rev. Sir, belong to; which, if any credit is due to the eminent divines, whose works we are in the habit of reading, and more particularly to the illustrious Bishop Porteus in his celebrated and standing work, called A BRIEF CONFUTATION OF THE ERRORS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME, *extracted from Archbishop Secker's* V. SERMONS AGAINST POPERY (1), is such a mass of absurdity, bigotry, superstition, idolatry, and immorality, that, to say we respect and love those who obstinately adhere to it, as we do other Christians, would seem a compromise of reason, scripture, and virtuous feeling.

And yet even of this Church we have formed a less revolting idea, in some particulars, than we did formerly. This has happened from our having just read over your controversial work against Dr. Sturges, called LETTERS TO A PREBENDARY, to which our attention was directed by the notice taken of it in the Houses of Parliament, and particularly by the very

(1) The Norrisian Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, speaking of this work says: 'The Refutation of the Popish errors is now 'reduced into a small compass by Archbishop Secker and Bishop Porteus.'—*Lectures in Divinity, Vol. IV. p.* 71.

unexpected compliment paid to it by that ornament of our Church, Bishop Horsley. We admit then (at least I, for my part, admit) that you have refuted the most odious of the charges brought against your religion, namely, that it is, necessarily, and, upon principle, intolerant and sanguinary, requiring its members to persecute with fire and sword all persons of a different creed from their own, when this is in their power. You have also proved that Papists may be good subjects to a Protestant Sovereign; and you have shewn, by an interesting historical detail, that the Roman Catholics of this kingdom have been conspicuous for their loyalty from the time of Elizabeth down to the present time. Still most of the absurd and antiscriptural doctrines and practices on the above, relating to the worship of Saints and Images, to Transubstantiation and the half Communion, to Purgatory and Shutting up the Bible, with others of the same nature, you have not, to my recollection, so much as attempted to defend. In a word, I write to you, Rev. Sir, on the present occasion, in the name of our respectable Society, to ask you whether you fairly give up these doctrines and practices of Popery, as untenable, or otherwise, whether you will condescend to interchange a few letters with me on the subject of them, for the satisfaction of me and my friends, and with the sole view of mutually discovering and communicating re-

ligious truths. We remark that you say in your first Letter to Dr. Sturges: 'Should I have occasion to 'make another reply to you, I will try if it be not 'possible to put the whole question at issue between 'us into such a shape as shall remove the danger of 'irritation on both sides, and still enable us, if we are 'mutually so disposed, to agree together in the ac-'knowledgement of the same religious truths.'—If you still think that this is possible, for God's sake and your neighbours' sake, delay not to undertake it. The plan embraces every advantage we wish for, and excludes every evil we deprecate. You shall manage the discussion in your own way, and we will give you as little interruption as possible.—Two of the essays above alluded to, with which our worthy Rector lately furnished us, I, with your permission, enclose, to convince you that genius and sacred literature are cultivated round the Wrekin, and on the banks of the Severn.

I remain, Rev. Sir, with great respect,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

JAMES BROWN.

ESSAY I.

ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, AND OF NATURAL RELIGION.

By the Rev. Samuel Carey, LL. D.

FORESEEING that my health will not permit me, for a considerable time, to meet my respected friends at New Cottage, I comply with the request, which several of them have made me, in sending them, in writing, my ideas on the two noblest subjects which can occupy the mind of man: *the Existence of God, and the Truth of Christianity.* In doing this, I profess not to make new discoveries, but barely to state certain arguments, which I collected, in my youth, from the learned Hugo Grotius, our own judicious Clark, and other advocates of Natural and Revealed Religion. I offer no apology for adopting the words of Scripture, in arguing with persons, who are supposed not to admit its authority, when these express my meaning as fully as any others can do.

The first argument for the existence of God is thus expressed by the Royal Prophet: *Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.* Ps. c. 3. In fact, when I ask myself that

question, which every reflecting man must sometimes ask himself: *How came I into this state of existence? Who has bestowed upon me the being which I enjoy?* I am forced to answer: *It is not I that made myself;* and each of my forefathers, if asked the same question, must have returned the same answer. In like manner, if I interrogate the several beings with which I am surrounded, the earth, the air, the water, the stars, the moon, the sun, each of them, as an ancient Father says, will answer me, in its turn: *It was not I that made you; I, like you, am a creature of yesterday, as incapable of giving existence to you as I am of giving it to myself.* In short, however often each of us repeats the question: *How came I hither? Who has made me what I am?* we shall never find a rational answer to them, till we come to acknowledge that there is an *Eternal, Necessary, Self-existent Being*, the author of all contingent beings, which is no other than GOD. It is this *Necessity of being*, this *Self-existence*, which constitute the nature of God, and from which all his other perfections flow. Hence when he deigned to reveal himself on the flaming mountain of Horeb to the holy legislator of his chosen people, being asked by this prophet; what was his *proper name?* he answered: I AM THAT I AM. *Exod.* iii. 14. This is as much as to say: *I alone exist of myself: all others are created beings, which exist by my will.*

From this attribute of *Self-existence*, all the other perfections of the Deity, eternity, immensity, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, justice, mercy, and bounty, each in an infinite degree, necessarily flow, because there is nothing to limit his existence and attributes, and because, whatever perfection is found in any created being, must, like its existence, have been derived from this universal source.

This proof of the existence of God, though demonstrative and self-evident to reflecting beings, is, nevertheless, we have reason to fear, lost on a great proportion of our fellow-creatures; because they hardly reflect at all; or, at least, never consider, *Who made them*, or, *what they were made for:* but that other proof, which results from the magnificence, the beauty, and the harmony of the creation, as it falls under the senses, so it cannot be thought to escape the attention of the most stupid or savage of rational beings. The starry heavens, the fulminating clouds, the boundless ocean, the variegated earth, the organized human body, all these, and many other phænomena of nature, must strike the mind of the untutored savage, no less than that of the studious philosopher, with a conviction that there is an infinitely powerful, wise and bountiful Being, who is the author of these things: though, doubtless, the latter, in proportion as he sees more clearly and extensively than the former the properties and œconomy

of different parts of the creation, possesses a stronger physical evidence, as it is called, of the existence of the Great Creator. In fact, if the Pagan physician, Galen (1), from the imperfect knowledge which he possessed of the structure of the human body, found himself compelled to acknowledge the existence of an infinitely wise and beneficent being, to make it such as it is, what would he not have said had he been acquainted with the circulation of the blood, and the uses and harmony of the arteries, veins, and lacteals! If the philosophical orator, Tully, discovered and enlarged on the same truth, from the little knowledge of astronomy which he possessed (2), what strains of eloquence would he not have poured forth upon it, had he been acquainted with the discoveries of Galileo and Newton, relative to the magnitude and distances of the stars, the motions of the planets and the comets! Yes, all nature proclaims that there is a Being who is *wise in heart and mighty in strength:—who doth great things and past finding out; yea wonders without number:—who stretcheth out the North over the empty places and hangeth the earth upon nothing.—The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.—Lo! these are a part of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him! The thunder of his power who can understand!* Job. ix.—xxvi.

(1) De Usu Partium. (2) De Natura Deorum, l. ii.

The proofs, however, of God's existence, which can least be evaded, are those which come immediately home to a man's own heart; convincing him, with the same evidence, he has of his own existence, that there is an all-seeing, infinitely just, and infinitely bountiful Master above, who is witness of all his actions and words, and of his very thoughts. For whence arises the heartfelt pleasure which the good man feels on resisting a secret temptation to sin, or in performing an act of beneficence, though in the utmost secresy? Why does he raise his countenance to heaven, with devotion, and why is he then prepared to meet death with cheerful hope, unless it be that his conscience tells him of a munificent rewarder of virtue, the spectator of what he does? And why does the most hardened sinner tremble and faulter in his limbs and at his heart, when he commits his most secret sins of theft, vengeance, or impurity? Why, especially, does he sink into agonies of horror and despair at the approach of death, unless it be that he is deeply convinced of the constant presence of an all-seeing witness, and of an infinitely holy, powerful, and just Judge, *into whose hands it is a terrible thing to fall!—In vain does he say: Darkness encompasseth me and the walls cover me: no one seeth: of whom am I affraid?*—for his conscience tells him that, *The eyes of the Lord are far*

brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men. Ecclus. xxiii. 26, 28.

This last argument, in particular, is so obvious and convincing, that I cannot bring myself to believe there ever was a human being, of sound sense, who was really an Atheist. Those persons who have tried to work themselves into a persuasion that there is no God, will generally be found, both in ancient and modern times, to be of the most profligate manners, who dreading to meet him as their Judge, try to persuade themselves that he does not exist. This has been observed by St. Austin, who says: 'No man 'denies the existence of God, but such a one whose 'interest it is that there should be no God.' Yet even they who pretend to disbelieve the existence of a Supreme Being, in the broad day-light, and among their profligate companions, in the darkness and solitude of the night; and, still more, under the apprehension of death, fail not to confess it; as Seneca, I think, has somewhere observed (1).

A son heareth his father, and a servant his master, says the Prophet Malachi. *If then I be a father,*

(1) It is proper here to observe, that a large proportion of the boasting Atheists who signalized their impiety during the late French Revolution, when they came to die, acknowledged that their irreligion had been affected, and that they never doubted, in their hearts, of the existence of God and the truths of Christianity. Among these were Boulanger, La Metrie, Collot d'Herbois, Egalité Duke of Orleans, &c.

where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts, (i. 6.) In a word: it is impossible to believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, our Creator, our Lord, and our Judge, without being conscious, at the same time, of our obligation to worship him exteriorly and interiorly, to fear him, to love him, and to obey him. This constitutes *Natural Religion;* by the observance of which the ancient Patriarchs, together with Melchisedec, Job, and, we trust, very many other virtuous and religious persons of different ages and countries, have been acceptable to God in this life, and have attained to everlasting bliss in the other; still we must confess, with deep sorrow, that the number of such persons has been small, compared with those of every age and nation, who, as St. Paul says: *When they knew God, glorified him not as God; neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations; and their foolish hearts were darkened;—who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever more.* Rom. i. 21, 25.

SAMUEL CAREY.

ESSAY II.

ON THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

By the Rev. Samuel Carey, LL. D.

THOUGH the light of nature is abundantly sufficient, as I trust I have shewn in my former essay, to prove the existence of God, and the duty of worshipping and serving him, yet this was not the only light that was communicated to mankind in the first ages of the world concerning these matters, since many things relating to them were revealed by God to the Patriarchs, and, through them, to their contemporaries and descendants. At length this knowledge was almost universally obliterated from the minds of men, and the light of reason itself was so clouded by the boundless indulgence of their passions, that they seemed, every where, sunk almost to a level with the brute creation. Even the most polished nations, the Greeks and the Romans, blushed not at unnatural lusts, and boasted of the most horrid cruelties. Plutarch describes the celebrated Grecian sages, Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Cebes, &c. as indulging freely in the former (1), and

(1) De Isid. et Osirid. Even the refined Cicero and Virgil did not blush at these infamies.

every one knows that the chief amusement of the Roman people, was to behold their fellow-creatures murdering one another in the amphitheatres, sometimes by hundreds and thousands at a time. But the depravity and impiety of the ancient pagans, and, I may say the same of those of modern times, appears chiefly in their religious doctrines and worship. What an absurd and disgusting rabble of pretended Deities, marked with every crime that disgraces the worst of mortals, lust, envy, hatred and cruelty, did not the above-named refined nations worship, and that, in several instances, by the imitation of their crimes! Plato allows of drunkenness in honour of the Gods; Aristotle admits of indecent representations of them. How many temples were every where erected, and prostitutes consecrated to the worship of Venus (1)? And how generally were human sacrifices offered up in honour of Moloch, Saturn, Thor, Diana, Woden, and other pretended Gods, or rather real demons, by almost every Pagan nation, Greek and barbarian, and among the rest by the ancient Britons, inhabitants of this island! It is true, some few sages of antiquity, by listening to the dictates of nature and reason, saw into the absurdity of the popular religion, and discovered the

(1) Strabo tells us, that there were 1000 prostitutes attached to the Temple of Venus, at Corinth. The Athenians attributed the preservation of their city to the prayers of its prostitutes.

existence and attributes of the true God; but then how unsteady and imperfect was their belief, even in this point! and when *they knew God they did not glorify him as God, nor give him thanks, but became vain in their thoughts.* Rom. i. 21. In short, they were so bewildered on the whole subject of religion, that Socrates, the wisest of them all, declared it 'impos-'sible for men to discover this, unless the Deity him-'self deigned to reveal it to them.' (1) Indeed it was an effort of mercy, worthy the Great and Good God, to make such a revelation of himself, and of his acceptable worship to poor, benighted, and degraded man. This he did, first, in favour of a poor, afflicted, captive tribe on the banks of the Nile, the Israelites, whom he led from thence into the country of their ancestors, and raised up to be a powerful nation, by a series of astonishing miracles, instructing and confirming them in the knowledge and worship of himself by his different prophets. He afterwards did the same thing, in favour of all the people of the earth, and to a far greater extent, by the promised Messiah, and his Apostles. It is to this latter Divine Legation I shall here confine my arguments: though, indeed, the one confirms the other; since Christ and the apostles continually bear testimony to the mission of Moses.

(1) Plato Dialog. Alcibiad.

All history, then, and tradition prove that in the reign of Tiberius, the second Roman Emperor after Julius Cæsar, an extraordinary personage, Jesus Christ, appeared in Palestine, teaching a new system of religion and morality, far more sublime and perfect than any which the Pagan Philosophers, or even than the Hebrew Prophets had inculcated. He confirmed the truths of natural Religion and of the Mosaic revelation; but then he vastly extended their sphere, by the communication of many heavenly mysteries, concerning the nature of the one true God, his œconomy in redeeming man by his own vicarious sufferings, the restoration and future immortality of our bodies, and the final, decisive trial we are to undergo before him, our destined judge. He enforced the obligation of loving our heavenly Father, above all things, of praying to him continually, and of referring all our thoughts, words, and actions to his divine honour. He insisted on the necessity of denying, not one or other of our passions, as the philosophers had done, who, as Tertullian says, *drove out one nail with another;* but the whole collection of them, disorderly and vitiated as they are, since the fall of our first parent. In opposition to our innate avarice, pride, and love of pleasure; he opened his mission by teaching that: *Blessed are the poor in spirit; Blessed are the meek; Blessed are they that mourn, &c.* With

respect to our fellow-creatures; teaching as he did every virtue, he singled out fraternal charity for his peculiar and characteristic precept; requiring that his disciples should love one another as they love themselves, and even as he himself has loved them; he who laid down his life for them! and he extended the obligation of this precept to our enemies, equally with our friends.

Nor was the Morality of Jesus a mere speculative system of precepts, like the systems of the philosophers: it was of a practical nature, and he himself confirmed, by his example, every virtue which he inculcated, and more particularly that hardest of all others to reduce to practice, the love of our enemies. Christ had *gone about*, as the sacred text expresses it, *doing good to all*, Acts x. 38. and evil to no one. He had cured the sick of Judea and the neighbouring countries, had given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and even life to the dead; but, above all things, he had enlightened the minds of his hearers with the knowledge of pure and sublime truths, capable of leading them to present and future happiness: yet was he every where calumniated and persecuted, till at length, his inveterate enemies fulfilled their malice against him, by nailing him to a cross, thereon to expire, by lengthened torments. Not content with this, they came before his gibbet, deriding him in

his agony with insulting words and gestures. What, now, is the return which the author of Christianity makes for such unexampled barbarity? He excuses the authors of it! He prays for them! *Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do!* Luke xxiii. 34. No wonder this proof of supernatural charity should have staggered the most hardened infidels; one of whom confesses that, 'if Socrates has 'died like a philosopher, Jesus alone has died like 'a God!' (1). The precepts and the example of the master have not been lost upon his disciples.—These have ever been distinguished by their practice of virtue, and, particularly, by their charity and forgiveness of injuries. The first of them who laid down his life for Christ, St. Stephen, while the Jews were stoning him to death, prayed thus, with his last voice: *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!* Acts vii. 59.

Having considered the several systems of paganism, which have prevailed, and that still prevail in different parts of the world, both as to belief and practice, together with the speculations of the wisest infidel philosophers concerning them; and having contemplated, on the other hand, the doctrine of the New Testament on both of them, namely, theory and practice, I would

(1) Rousseau Emile.

ask any candid unbeliever, where he thought Jesus Christ could have acquired the idea of so sublime, so pure, so efficacious, a religion as Christianity is, especially when compared with the others above alluded to? Could he have acquired it in the workshop of a poor artisan of Nazareth, or among the fishermen of the lake of Genezareth? Then, how could he and his poor unlettered Apostles succeed in propagating this religion, as they did throughout the world, in opposition to all the talents and power of philosophers and princes, and all the passions of all mankind? No other answers can be given to these questions, than that the religion itself has been *divinely revealed*, and that it has been *divinely assisted*, in its progress throughout the world.

In addition to this *internal evidence* of Christianity, as it is called, there are *external proofs*, which must not be passed over. Christ, on various occasions, appealed to the miracles which he wrought, in confirmation of his doctrine and mission; miracles public and indisputable, which, from the testimony of Pilate himself, were placed on the records of the Roman Empire (1), and which were not denied by the most determined enemies of Christianity, such as Celsus, Porphyrius, and Julian, the apostate. Among these miracles, there

(1) Tertul. in Apolog.

is one of so extraordinary a nature, as to render it quite unnecessary to mention any others, and which therefore is always appealed to by the Apostles, as the grand proof of the gospel they preached: I mean the *Resurrection of Christ from the dead*; to which must be added its circumstances, namely, that he raised himself to life *by his own power*, without the intervention of any living person; and that he did this *in conformity with his prediction, at the time, which he had appointed* for this event, and in *defiance of the efforts of his enemies*, to detain his body in the sepulchre. To elude the evidence resulting from this unexampled prodigy, one or other of the following assertions must be maintained, either that the *Disciples were deceived* in believing him to be risen from the dead, or that *they combined to deceive the world* into a belief of that imposition.—Now it cannot be credited that they themselves were deceived in this matter, being many in number, and having the testimony of their eyes, in seeing their Master repeatedly during forty days; of their ears in hearing his voice; and one, the most incredulous among them, of *his feeling in touching* his person and *probing* his wounds; nor can it be believed that they *conspired to propagate an unavailing falsehood* of this nature throughout the nations of the earth, namely, that a person, put to death in Judea, had risen again to life, without any prospect to themselves *for this world*, but

that of persecution, torments and a cruel death, which they successively endured, as did their numerous disciples after them, in testimony of this fact; or, *for the other world*, but the vengeance of the God of truth.

Next to the miracles, wrought by Christ, is the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies concerning him, in proof of the religion taught by him. To mention a few of these: He was born just *after the sceptre had departed from the tribe of Juda*, Gen. xlix. 10.; at the *end of seventy-two weeks* of years from the restoration of Jerusalem, *Dan.* ix. 24; while the *Second Temple* of Jerusalem was *in being*, Hagg. ii. 7. He was born in *Bethlehem*, Mic. v. 2.; worked the identical *miracles foretold* of him, *Isai.* xxxv. 5. He was *sold* by his perfidious disciple for *thirty pieces of silver*, which were laid out in the *purchase of a potter's field*, Zach. xi. 13. He was *scourged, spit upon*, Isai. l. 6.; placed *among malefactors*, Isai. xxxiii. 12. His *hands and feet were transfixed* with nails, *Ps.* xxii. 16.; and his *side was opened* with a spear, *Zach.* xii. 10. Finally, he *died*, was *buried with honour*, Isai. liii. 9.; and *rose again* to life *without experiencing corruption*, Ps. xvi. 10. The sworn enemies of Christ, the Jews, were, during many hundred years before his coming, and still are in possession of the Scriptures, containing these and many other predictions concerning him, which were strictly fulfilled.

The very existence, and other circumstances respecting this extraordinary people, the Jews, are so many arguments in proof of Christianity. They have now subsisted, as a distinct people, for more than four thousand years, during which they have again and again been subdued, harassed, and almost extirpated. Their mighty conquerors, the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Syrians, and the Romans have, in their turns, ceased to exist, and can no where be found as distinct nations: while the Jews exist in great numbers, and are known in every part of the world. How can this be accounted for? Why has God preserved them alone, amongst the ancient nations of the earth? The truth is, they are still the subject of prophecy, with respect to both the Old and the New Testament. They exist, as monuments of God's wrath against them; as witnesses to the truth of the Scriptures which condemn them; and as the destined subjects of his final mercy before the end of the world. They are to be found in every quarter of the globe; but in the condition which their great Legislator Moses threatened them with, if they forsook the Lord, namely, that he would *remove them into all the kingdoms of the earth.* Deut. xxviii. 25. That they should become *an astonishment, and a by-word, among all nations,* ibid. 37. That they should *find no ease, neither should the sole of their foot have rest,* ibid. 65.

Finally, they are every where seen, but carrying, written on their foreheads, the curse which they pronounced on themselves in rejecting their Messiah: *His blood be upon us and upon our children.* Mat. xxvii. 25. Still is this extraordinary people preserved, to be, in the end, converted, and to find mercy. *Rom.* xi. 26, &c.

SAMUEL CAREY.

LETTER II.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq. &c.

PRELIMINARIES.

Winton, October 20, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

You certainly want no apology for writing to me on the subject of your letter. For if, as St. Peter inculcates, each Christian ought to be *Ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him*, 1 Pet. iii. 15. how inexcusable would a person of my ministry and commission be, who am *a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise*, Rom. i. 14., were I unwilling to give the utmost satisfaction, in my power, respecting the Catholic Religion, to any human being whose inquiries appear to proceed from a serious and candid mind, desirous of discovering and embracing religious truth, such as I must believe yours to be. And yet this disposition is exceedingly rare among Christians. Infinitely the greater part of them, in choosing a system of religion, or in adhering to one, are guided by motives of interest, worldly honour or convenience. These inducements not only rouse their worst passions, but also blind their judgment; so as to create hideous phantoms to their intellectual eyes, and to hinder them from seeing the most conspicuous ob-

jects which stand before them. To such inconsistent Christians nothing proves so irritating as the attempt to disabuse them of their errors, except the success of it, by putting it out of their power to defend them any longer. These are they; and O! how infinite is their number! of whom Christ says: *They love darkness rather than light*, John iii. 16.; and who say to the Prophets: *Prophesy not unto us right things: speak unto us smooth things.* Isai. xxx. 10. They form to themselves *a false conscience*, as the Jews did when they murdered their Messiah, *Acts* iii. 17.; and as he himself foretold many others would do, in murdering his disciples. *John* xvi. 2. I cannot help saying that, I myself have experienced something of this spirit in my religious discussions with persons who have been loudest in professing their candour and charity. Hence, and I make no doubt that, if the elucidation which you call for at my hands, for your numerous Society, should happen, by any means to become public, that I shall have to *eat the bread of affliction, and drink the water of tribulation*, 1 Kings xxii. 27. for this discharge of my duty, perhaps for the remainder of my life. But, as the Apostle writes, *none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear to me, so that I may finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.* Acts xx. 24.

It remains, Sir, to settle the conditions of our correspondence. What I propose is, that, in the first place, we should mutually, and indeed all of us who are concerned in this friendly controversy, be at perfect liberty to speak without offence to any one of doctrines, practices, and persons, as we judge best for the discovery of truth: secondly, that we should be disposed, in common, as far as poor human nature will permit, to investigate truth with impartiality; to acknowledge it, when discovered, with candour; and, of course, to renounce every error and unfounded prejudice that may be detected, on any side, whatever it may cost us in so doing. I, for my part, Dear Sir, here solemnly promise, that I will publicly renounce the Religion, of which I am a Minister, and will induce as many of my flock, as I may have influence over, to do the same, should it prove to be that 'mass of absurdity, bigotry, 'superstition, idolatry, and immorality,' which you, Sir, and most Protestants conceive it to be; nay, even if I should not succeed in clearing it of these respective charges. To religious controversy, when originating in its proper motives, a desire of serving God and securing our salvation, I cannot declare myself an enemy, without virtually condemning the conduct of Christ himself, who, on every occasion, arraigned and refuted the errors of the Pharisees: but I cannot conceive any hypocrisy so detestable as that of mounting the pulpit

or employing the pen on sacred subjects, to serve our temporal interest, our resentment or our pride, under pretext of promoting or defending religious truth.—To inquirers, in the former predicament, I hold myself a debtor, as I have already said; but the circumstances must be extraordinary to induce me to hold a communication with persons in the latter. Lastly, as you appear, Sir, to approve of the plan I spoke of in my first letter to Dr. Sturges, I mean to pursue it on the present occasion. This, however, will necessarily throw back the examination of your charges to a considerable distance; as several other important inquiries must precede.

I am, &c.

J. M.

LETTER III.

From JAMES BROWN, Esq. to the Rev. J. M. D.D.

PRELIMINARIES.

New Cottage, Oct. 30, 1801.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE been favoured, in due course, with yours of the 7th instant, which I have communicated to those persons of our Society, whom I have had an opportunity of seeing. No circumstance could strike us with greater sorrow, than that you should suffer any inconvenience from your edifying promptness to comply with our well meant request, and we confidently trust that nothing of the kind will take place through our fault. We agree with you, as to the necessity of perfect freedom of speech, where the discovery of important truths is the real object of inquiry. Hence, while we are at liberty to censure many of your Popes and other clergy, Mr. Topham will not be offended with any thing that you can prove against Calvin, nor will Mr. Rankin quarrel with you for exposing the faults of George Fox, and James Naylor, nor shall I complain of you for any thing that you can make out against our venerable Latimer or Cranmer; I say the same of doctrines and practices as of persons. If you are guilty of idolatry, or we of heresy, we are respec-

tively unfortunate, and the greatest charity we can do is to point out to each other the danger of our respective situations to their full extent. Not to renounce error and embrace truth of every kind when we clearly see it, would be folly; and to neglect doing this when the question is about religious truth, would be folly and wickedness combined together. Finally, we cheerfully leave you to follow what course you please, and to whatever extent you please, provided you only give us such satisfaction as you can give, on the subjects I mentioned in my former letter.

I am,

Rev. Sir, &c.

JAMES BROWN.

LETTER IV.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq. &c.

DISPOSITIONS FOR RELIGIOUS INQUIRY.

DEAR SIR,

THE dispositions which you profess, on the part of your friends, as well as yourself, I own, please me and animate me to undertake the task you impose upon me. Nevertheless, availing myself of the liberty of speech which you and your friends allow me, I am forced to observe that there is nothing in which men are more apt to deceive themselves than in thinking themselves to be free from religious prejudices, and sincere in seeking after, and resolved to embrace and follow the truth of religion, in opposition to their preconceived opinions and worldly interests. How many imitate Pilate, who, when he had asked our Saviour the question; *What is truth?* presently went out of his company, before he could receive an answer to it. *John* xviii. 38. How many others resemble the rich young man, who, having interrogated Christ; *What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?* when this Divine Master answered him: *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor;—went away sorrowful!* Mat. xix. 22. Finally, how many more act, like certain pre-

sumptuous disciples of our Lord, who, when he had propounded to them a mystery beyond their conception, that of the Real Presence, in these words: *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;—said, this is a hard saying; who can hear it?—and went back and walked no more with him!* John vi. 56. O! if all Christians, of the different sects and opinions, were but possessed of the sincerity, disinterestedness and earnestness to serve their God and save their souls, which a Francis Walsingham, kinsman to the great statesman of that name, a Hugh-Paulin Cressy, Dean of Laughlin and Prebendary of Windsor, and an Anthony Ulric, Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburgh, prove themselves to have been possessed of, the first in his *Search into Matters of Religion*, the second in his *Exomologesis, or Motives of Conversion*, &c. and the last in his *Fifty Reasons*; how soon would all and every one of our controversies cease, and we be all united in one faith, hope, and charity! I will here transcribe, from the Preface to the *Fifty Reasons*, what the illustrious relative of his Majesty says concerning the dispositions, with which he set about inquiring into the grounds and differences of the several systems of Christianity, when he began to entertain doubts concerning the truth of that in which he had been educated, namely, Lutheranism. He says—'First, I earnestly 'implored the aid and grace of the Holy Ghost, and

'with all my power begged the light of true faith, from 'God, the Father of lights,' &c.——'Secondly, I made 'a strong resolution, by the grace of God, to avoid 'sin, well knowing that *Wisdom will not enter into a 'corrupt mind, nor dwell in a body subject to sin,'* Wisd. i. 4. 'and I am convinced, and was so then, that the 'reason why so many are ignorant of the true faith, 'and do not embrace it, is because they are plunged into 'several vices, and particularly into carnal sins.'—— Then,—'Thirdly, I renounced all sorts of prejudices, 'whatever they were, which incline men to one Religion 'more than another, which unhappily I might have 'formerly espoused, and I brought myself to a perfect 'indifference, so as to be ready to embrace whichsoever 'the grace of the Holy Ghost and the light of reason 'should point out to me, without any regard to the 'advantages and inconveniences that might attend it 'in this world.'——'Lastly, I entered upon this deli- 'beration and this choice in the manner I should wish 'to have done it at the hour of my death, and in a full 'conviction that, at the day of judgment, I must give 'an account to God why I followed this Religion in 'preference to all the rest.'——The Princely inquirer finishes this account of himself with the following awful reflections: 'Man has but one soul, which will 'be eternally either damned or saved. *What doth it 'avail a man to gain the whole world and to lose his own*

'*soul?* Mat. xvi. 26.—Eternity knows no end. The 'course of it is perpetual. It is a desire of unlimited 'duration.—There is no comparison between things 'infinite and those which are not so. O! the happiness 'of the eternity of the Saints! O! the wretchedness 'of the eternity of the damned. One of these two 'eternities awaits us!'

I remain, Sir,

Yours, &c.

J. M.

LETTER V.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq.

METHOD OF FINDING OUT THE TRUE RELIGION.

DEAR SIR,

It is obvious to common sense that, in order to find out any hidden thing, or to do any difficult thing, we must first discover and then follow the proper method for such purpose. If we do not take the right road to any distant place, it cannot be expected that we should arrive at it. If we get hold of a wrong clue, we shall never extricate ourselves from a labyrinth. Some persons choose their religion as they do their clothes, by fancy. They are pleased, for example, with the talents of a preacher, when presently they adopt his Creed. Many adhere to their religious system, merely because they were educated in it, and because it was that of their parents and family; which, if it were a reasonable motive for their resolution, would equally excuse Jews, Turks, and Pagans, for persisting in their respective impiety, and would impeach the preaching of Christ and his Apostles! Others glory in their religion, because it is the one established in this their country, so renowned for science, literature, and arms: not reflecting that the

polished and conquering nations of antiquity, the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, were left, by the inscrutable judgments of God, *in darkness and the shadow of death,* while a poor oppressed and despised people, on the banks of the Jordan, were the only depositary of Divine truth and the sole truly enlightened nation. But, far the greater part even of Christians, of every denomination, make the business of eternity subservient to that of time, and profess the religion which suits best with their interest, their reputation, and their convenience. I trust that none of your respectable society fall under any of these descriptions. They all have, or fancy they have, a rational method of discovering religious truth, in other words, an adequate *Rule of Faith.* Before I enter into any disquisition on this all-important controversy concerning the *Right Rule of Faith,* on which the determination of every other depends, I will lay down three fundamental maxims, the truth of which, I believe, no rational Christian will dispute.

First, *Our Divine Master, Christ, in establishing a Religion here on earth, to which all the nations of it were invited,* Mat. xviii. 19. *left some* RULE or Method, *by which those persons, who sincerely seek for it, may certainly find it.*

Secondly, *This Rule or Method must be* SECURE *and neverfailing; so as not to be ever liable to lead a*

rational, sincere inquirer into error, impiety, or immorality of any kind.

Thirdly, *This Rule or Method must be* UNIVERSAL, *that is to say, adapted to the abilities and other circumstances of all those persons for whom the Religion itself was intended;* namely, *the great bulk of mankind.*

By adhering to these undeniable maxims, we shall quickly, Dear Sir, and clearly discover the Method appointed by Christ for arriving at the knowledge of the truths which he has taught, in other words, at *The Right Rule of Faith.* Being possessed of this Rule, we shall have nothing else, of course, to do than to make use of it, for securely, and, I trust, amicably settling all our controversies. This is the short and satisfactory Method of composing religious differences, which I alluded to in my above-mentioned letter to Dr. Sturges. To discuss them all, separately, is an endless task, whereas this Method reduces them to a single question.

I am, &c.

J. M.

LETTER VI.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq.

THE FIRST FALLACIOUS RULE OF FAITH.

DEAR SIR,

AMONG serious Christians, who profess to make the discovery and practice of Religion their first and earnest care, three different Methods or Rules have been adopted for this purpose. The first consists in a supposed *Private Inspiration*, or an immediate light and motion of God's Spirit, communicated to the individual. This was the Rule of Faith and conduct formerly professed by the Montanists, the Anabaptists, the Family of Love, and is now professed by the Quakers, the Moravians, and different classes of the Methodists. The second of these Rules, is the *Written Word of God*, or THE BIBLE, *according as it is understood by each particular reader or hearer of it.* This is the professed Rule of the more regular sects of Protestants, such as the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Socinians, the Church-of-England men. The third Rule is THE WORD OF GOD, *at large, whether written in the Bible, or handed down from the Apostles in continued succession by the Catholic*

Church, and as it is understood and explained by this Church. To speak more accurately, besides their *Rule* of Faith, namely, *Scripture* and *Tradition,* Catholics acknowledge *an unerring judge of controversy,* or sure guide in all matters, relating to salvation, namely, THE CHURCH. I shall now proceed to shew that the first-mentioned Rule, namely, a supposed *Private Inspiration,* is quite fallacious, in as much as *it is liable to conduct, and has conducted many into acknowledged errors and impiety.*

About the middle of the second age of Christianity, Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla, with their followers, by adopting this enthusiastical rule, rushed into the excess of folly and blasphemy. They taught that the Holy Spirit, having failed to save mankind, by Moses, and afterwards by Christ, had enlightened and sanctified them to accomplish this great work. The strictness of their precepts, and the apparent sanctity of their lives, deceived many, till at length the two former proved what spirit they were guided by, in hanging themselves (1). Several other heretics became dupes of the same principles in the primitive and the middle ages: but it was reserved for the time of religious licentiousness, improperly called the Reformation, to display the full extent of its absurdity and impiety. In less than five years after

(1) Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. v. c. 15.

Luther had sounded the trumpet of evangelical liberty, the sect of Anabaptists arose in Germany and the Low Countries. They professed to hold immediate communication with God, and to be ordered by him to despoil and kill all the wicked, and to establish a kingdom of the just (1), who, to become such, were all to be rebaptized. Carlostad, Luther's first disciple of note, embraced this *Ultra-Reformation;* but its acknowledged head, during his reign, was John Bockhold, a taylor of Leyden, who proclaimed himself King of Sion, and who, during a certain time, was really sovereign of Munster, in Lower Germany, where he committed the greatest imaginable excesses, marrying eleven wives at a time, and putting them, and numberless other of his subjects to death, at the motion of his supposed interior spirit (2). He declared that God had made him a present of Amsterdam and other cities, which he sent parties of his disciples to take possession of. These ran naked through the streets, howling out, 'Woe to Babylon; woe to the 'wicked;' and, when they were apprehended, and on the point of being executed for their seditions and

(1) 'Cum Deo colloquium esse et mandatum habere se dicebant, ut, 'impiis omnibus interfectis, novum constituerent mundum, in quo pii 'solum et innocentes viverent et rerum potirentur.'—Sleidan. De Stat. Rel. et Reip. Comment. l. iii. p. 45.

(2) Hist. Abreg. de la Reform. par Gerard Brandt, tom. i. p. 46. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. by Maclaine, vol. iv. p. 452.

murders, they sung and danced on the scaffold, exulting in the imaginary light of their spirit (1). Herman, another Anabaptist, was moved by his spirit to declare himself the Messiah, and thus to evangelize the people, his hearers: 'Kill the priests, kill all the magistrates 'in the world: repent: your redemption is at hand (2).' One of their chief and most accredited preachers, David George, persuaded a numerous sect of them that 'the doctrine both of the Old and the New Tes-'tament was imperfect, but that his own was perfect, 'and that he was the *True Son of God* (3).' I do not notice these impieties and other crimes for their singularity or their atrociousness, but because they were committed *upon the principle and under a full conviction of an individual and uncontrollable inspiration*, on the part of their dupes and perpetrators.

Nor has our own country been more free from this enthusiastic principle than Germany and Holland. Nicholas, a disciple of the above-mentioned David George, came over to England with a supposed commission from God to teach men that the essence of Religion consists in the feelings of divine love, and that all other things relating either to faith or worship, are of no moment (4). He extended this maxim even to the fundamental precepts of morality, professing to

(1) Brandt, p. 49, &c.
(2) Idem. p. 51.
(3) Mosheim, vol. iv. p. 484.
(4) Ibid. Brandt.

continue in sin that grace might abound. His followers, under the name of the *Familists*, or *The Family of Love*, were very numerous at the end of the sixteenth century, about which time, Hacket, a Calvinist, giving way to the same spirit of delusion, became deeply persuaded that the spirit of the Messiah had descended upon him; and, having made several proselytes, he sent two of them, Arthington and Coppinger, to proclaim, through the streets of London, that Christ was come thither with his fan in his hand. This spirit, instead of being repressed, became still more ungovernable at the sight of the scaffold and the gibbet, prepared in Cheapside for his execution. Accordingly he continued, till the last, exclaiming: 'Jehova, 'Jehova; don't you see the heavens open, and Jesus 'coming to deliver me, &c.' (1). Who has not heard of Venner, and his Fifth Monarchy-men, who, guided by the same private spirit of inspiration, rushed from their meeting-house in Coleman-street, proclaiming that they would 'acknowledge no Sovereign but King 'Jesus, and that they would not sheathe their swords, 'till they had made Babylon (that is monarchy) a 'hissing and a curse, not only in England, but also 'throughout foreign countries; having an assurance 'that one of them would put a thousand enemies to 'flight, and two of them ten thousand.' Venner being

(1) Fuller's Church Hist. b. ix. p. 113. Stow's Annals A. D. 1591.

'taken and led to execution, with several of his fol-'lowers, protested it was not he but Jesus, who had 'acted as their leader (1).' I pass over the unexampled follies, and the horrors of the Grand Rebellion, having detailed many of them elsewhere (2). It is enough to remark that, while many of these were committed from the licentiousness of private interpretation of Scripture, many others originated in the enthusiastic opinion which I am now combatting, that of an immediate individual inspiration, equal to, if not superior, to that of the Scriptures themselves (3).

It was in the midst of these religious and civil commotions that the most extraordinary people of all those who have adopted the fallacious rule of private inspiration, started up at the call of George Fox, a shoe-maker of Leicestershire. His fundamental propositions, as laid down by the most able of his followers (4) are, that '*The Scriptures are not the ade-'quate, primary Rule of Faith and Manners,—but a 'secondary Rule, subordinate to the Spirit*, from which 'they have their excellency and certainty (5):' that

(1) Echard's Hist. of Eng. &c. (2) Letters to a Prebendary. Reign of Charles I.

(3) See the remarkable history of the military preachers at Kingston. Ibid.

(4) Robert Barclay's Apology for the Quakers.

(5) Propos. III. In defending this proposition, Barclay cites some of the Friends, who being unable to read the Scriptures, even in the vulgar language, and being pressed by adversaries with passages from it, *boldly denied*,

'the testimony of the spirit is that alone by which the 'true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be 'revealed (1):' that 'all true and acceptable worship 'of God is offered in the inward and immediate mov-'ing and drawing of his own Spirit, which is neither 'limited to places, times, nor persons (2).' Such are the avowed principles of the people called Quakers: let us now see some of the fruits of those principles, as recorded by themselves in their founder and first apostles.

George Fox tells of himself, that at the beginning of his mission he was 'Moved to go to several Courts 'and Steeple-houses (churches) at Mansfield, and 'other places, to warn them to leave off oppression 'and oaths, and to turn from deceit, and to turn to 'the Lord (3).' On these occasions the language and behaviour of his spirit was very far from the meekness and respect for constituted authorities of the Gospel Spirit, as appears from different passages in his Journal (4). He tells us of one of his disciples,

from the manifestation of truth in their own hearts, that such passages were contained in the Scriptures, p. 82.

(1) Propos. II. (2) Propos. XI.

(3) See the Journal of George Fox, written by himself, and published by his disciple Penn, son of Admiral Penn, folio, p. 17.

(4) I shall satisfy myself with citing part of his letter, written in 1660, to Charles II.——'King Charles, Thou camest not into this nation by sword 'nor by victory of war, but by the power of the Lord.——And if thou dost 'bear the sword in vain, and let drunkenness, oaths, plays, May-games, 'with fidlers, drums, and trumpets to play at them, with such like abomi-

William Sympson, who was 'moved of the Lord to 'go, at several times, for three years naked and bare-'foot before them, as a sign unto them, in markets, 'courts, towns, cities, to Priests' houses, and to great 'men's houses, telling them: *so should they be all 'stripped naked.* Another Friend, one Robert Hunt-'ingdon, was moved of the Lord to go into Carlisle 'Steeple-house with a white sheet about him (1).' We are told of a female Friend who went 'start naked, in 'the midst of public worship, into Whitehall Chapel, 'when Cromwell was there,' and another woman, who 'came into the Parliament House with a trencher in 'her hand, which she broke in pieces, saying: *Thus 'shall he be broke in pieces.*'——One came to the door of the Parliament House with a drawn sword, and wounded several, saying: '*he was* inspired by the 'Holy Spirit to kill every man that sat in that 'House (2).' But on no one occasion have the Friends, with George Fox himself, been so embarrassed to save their *Rule of Faith*, as they have been to reconcile with it the conduct of James Naylor (3). When cer-

'nations and vanities be encouraged, or go unpunished, as setting up of 'May-poles, with the image of the crown a-top of them, the nation will 'quickly turn, like Sodom and Gomorrah, and be as bad as the old world, 'who grieved the Lord, till he overthrew them: and so he will you; if 'these things be not suddenly prevented,' &c.———G. F.'s Journal, p. 225.

(1) Journal, p. 239. (2) Maclaine's note on Mosheim, vol. v. p. 470.

(3) See History of the Quakers by William Sewel, folio, p. 138. Journal of G. Fox, p. 220.

tain low and disorderly people, in Hampshire, disgraced their society and became obnoxious to the laws, G. Fox disowned them (1), but, when a Friend of James Naylor's character and services (2) became the laughing stock of the nation for his presumption and blasphemy, there was no other way for the Society to separate his cause from their own but by abandoning their fundamental principles, which leaves every man *to follow the spirit within him, as he himself feels it.* The fact is, James Naylor, like so many other dupes of a supposed private spirit, fancied himself to be the Messiah, and in this character rode into Bristol, his disciples spreading their garments before him and crying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Hosannah in the highest:* and when he had been scourged by order of Parliament, for his impiety, he permitted the fascinated women, who followed him, to kiss his feet and his wounds, and to hail him 'the Prince of Peace, the Rose of Sharon, the 'fairest of ten thousand,' &c. (3).

(1) Journal of G. Fox, p. 320.

(2) Ibid. p. 220. Sewel's Hist. of Quakers, p. 140.

(3) Echard's Hist. Maclaine's Mosheim. Neal's Hist. of Puritans. In closing this account of the Quakers we may remark that there is no appearance yet of the fulfilment of the confident prophecy with which Barclay concludes his Apology: 'That little spark (Quakerism) that hath appeared, shall grow 'to the consuming of whatsoever shall stand up to oppose it. The mouth of 'the Lord hath spoken it! Yea; he that hath risen in a small remnant, shall 'arise and go on by the same arm of power in his spiritual manifestation 'until he hath conquered all his enemies: until all the kingdoms of the earth 'become the kingdom of Jesus Christ.'

I pass over many sects of less note, as the Muggletonians, the Labbadists, &c. who, by pursuing the meteor of a supposed inward light, were led into the most impious and immoral practices. Allied to these are the Moravian Brethren, or Hernhutters, so called from Hernhuth in Moravia, where their Apostle, Count Zinzendorf, made an establishment for them. They are now spread over England with Ministers and Bishops appointed by others resident at Hernhuth. Their rule of faith, as laid down by Zinzendorf, is an imaginary inward light, against which the true believer cannot sin. This they are taught to wait for in quiet, omitting prayer, reading the Scriptures and other *works.* (1). They deny that even the moral law contained in the Scriptures is a rule of life for believers. Having considered this system in all its bearings, we are the less surprised at the disgusting obscenity, mingled with blasphemy, which is to be met with in the theological tracts of the German Count (2).

(1) Wesley, in a letter which he inscribes 'To the Church of God at Hernhuth,' says, 'There are many whom your brethren have advised, though not 'in their public preaching, not to use the Ordinances—reading the Scripture, 'praying, communicating; as the doing these things is *seeking salvation by* '*works.* Some of our English brethren (Moravians) say; *you will never have* '*faith till you leave off the Church and the Sacraments: as many go to hell by* '*praying as by thieving.*' Journal, 1740.—John Nelson in his own Journal tells us, that the Moravians call their Religion *The Liberty*, and the *Poor Sinnership*, adding that: 'they sell their prayer books and leave off reading 'and praying to follow the Lamb.'

(2) See Maclaine, Hist. vol. vi. p. 23, and Bishop Warburton's Doctrine of Grace, quoted by him.

The next system of delusion which I shall mention, as proceeding from the fatal principle of an *Interior Rule of Faith!* though framed in England, was also the work of a foreign Nobleman, Baron Sweedenborg. His first supposed revelation was at an Eating-house in London, about the year 1745. 'After I had dined,' says he, 'a man appeared to me sitting in the corner 'of the room, who cried out to me, with a terrible 'voice: *Dont eat so much.* The following night the 'same man appeared to me, shining with light, and 'said to me: *I am the Lord, your Creator and Re-* '*deemer: I have chosen you to explain to men the in-* '*terior and spiritual sense of the Scriptures: I will* '*dictate to you what you are to write* (1).' His imaginary communications with God and the Angels were as frequent and familiar as those of Mahomed, and his conceptions of heavenly things were as gross and incoherent as those of the Arabian impostor. Suffice it to say that his *God* is a mere *man*, his *Angels* are *male* and *female*, who marry together and follow various *trades and professions*. Finally, his *New Jerusalem*, which is to be spread over the whole earth, is so little different from this sublunary world that the entrance into it is *imperceptible* (2). So far is true, that the

(1) Baruel's Hist. du Jacobinisme, Tom. iv. p. 118.
(2) Ibid.

New Jerusalemites are spread throughout England, and have Chapels in most of its principal towns (1).

I am sorry to be obliged to enter, upon the same list with these enthusiasts, a numerous class, many of them very respectable, of modern religionists, called Methodists: yet, since their avowed system of Faith is, that this consists in an *instantaneous illapse of God's Spirit into the souls of certain persons*, by which they are *convinced of their justification and salvation*, without reference to Scripture or any thing else, they cannot be placed, as to their Rule of Faith, under any other denomination. This, according to their founder's doctrine, is the *only article of Faith;* all other articles he terms *opinions*, of which he says, 'the Methodists 'do not lay any stress, on them, whether right or

(1) Since the above letter was written another Sect, the Joannites, or disciples of Joanna Southcote, have risen to notice by their number and the singularity of their tenets. This female Apostle has been led by her spirit to believe herself to be the Woman of Genesis, destined to crush the head of the infernal serpent, with whom she supposes herself to have had daily battles, to the effusion of his blood. She believes herself to be, likewise, the woman of the Revelations crowned with twelve stars, which are so many Ministers of the Established Church. In fact, one of these, a richly beneficed Rector and of a noble family, acts as her secretary in writing and sealing passports to heaven, which she supposes herself authorized to issue, to the number of 144,000, at a very moderate price. One of these passports in due form is in the writer's possession. It is sealed with three seals. The first exhibits two stars, namely, the morning star, to represent Christ, the evening star, to represent herself. The second seal exhibits the lion of Juda, supposed to allude to the insane Prophet, Richard Brothers. The third shews the face of Joanna herself. Of late her inspiration has taken a new turn: she believes herself to be pregnant of the Messiah, and her followers have prepared silver vessels of various sorts for his use, when he is born.

wrong (1).' He continues: 'I am sick of opinions; 'I am weary to bear them; my soul loaths this frothy 'food (2)'. Conformably to this latitudinarian system, Wesley opens heaven indiscriminately to Churchmen, Presbyterians, Independants, Quakers, and even to Catholics (3). Addressing the last named he exclaims: 'O that God would write in your hearts the rules of 'self-denial and love laid down by Thomas a Kempis; or 'that you would follow in this and in good works, the 'burning and shining light of your own Church, the 'Marquis of Renty (4). Then would all who know and 'love the truth rejoice to acknowledge you as the 'Church of the living God (5).'

At the first rise of Methodism in Oxford, A.D. 1729, John Wesley and his companions were plain, serious Church-of-England-men, assiduous and *methodical* in praying, reading, fasting and the like. What they practiced themselves, they preached to others both in England and in America, till becoming intimate with the Moravian brethren, and particularly with Peter Bohler, one of their elders; John Wesley, 'became con-

(1) Wesley's Appeal, P. iii. p. 134. (2) Ibid. p. 135. (3) Appeal.

(4) His life is written in French, by Père St. Jure, a Jesuit, and abridged in English by J. Wesley.

(5) In his *Popery Calmly Considered*, p. 20. Wesley writes: 'I firmly be-'lieve that many members of the Church of Rome have been holy men, 'and that many are so now.' He elsewhere says, 'Several of them (Papists) 'have attained to as high a pitch of sanctity as human nature is capable of 'arriving at.'

'vinced, of unbelief, namely, a *want of that faith* '*whereby alone we are saved* (1).' Speaking of his past life and ministry, he says: 'I was fundamen-'tally a Papist and knew it not (2).' Soon after this persuasion, namely, on May 24, 1739, 'Going into a 'Society in Aldersgate-street,' he says, 'whilst a person 'was reading Luther's Preface to the Romans, about a 'quarter before nine, I felt my heart strangely warmed: 'I felt I did trust in Christ, in Christ alone for salva-'tion, and *an assurance was given me that he had taken* '*away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of* '*sin and death* (3).'

What were, now, the unavoidable consequences of a diffusion of this doctrine among the people at large? Let us hear them from Wesley's most able disciple and destined successor, Fletcher of Madeley. 'Antino-'mian principles and practices,' he says, 'have spread 'like wild fire among our Societies. Many persons, 'speaking in the most glorious manner of Christ and 'their interest in his complete salvation, have been 'found living in the greatest immoralities.—How few

(1) Whitehead's Life of John and Charles Wesley, vol. ii. p. 68.

(2) Journal, A. D. 1739.—Elsewhere Wesley says: 'O what a work has 'God begun since Peter Bohler came to England! such a one as shall never 'come to an end, till heaven and earth pass away.'

(3) Vide Whitehead, vol. ii. page 79. In a letter to his brother Samuel, John Wesley says: 'by a Christian I mean one who so believes in Christ 'that death hath no dominion over him, and in this obvious sense of the word 'I was not a Christian till 24th of May last year.' Ibid. 105.

'of our Societies, where cheating, extorting, or some 'other evil hath not broke out, and given such shakes 'to the Ark of the Gospel, that, had not the Lord in-'terposed, it must have been overset!' (1)—'I have 'seen them, who pass for believers, follow the strain of 'corrupt nature; and when they should have exclaimed 'against Antinomianism, I have heard them cry out '*against the legality of their wicked hearts*, which, 'they said, *still suggested that they were to do some-'thing for their salvation* (2)'.—'How few of our 'celebrated pulpits, where more has not been said *for 'sin* than *against it!* (3)'—The same candid writer, laying open the foulness of his former system, charges Sir Richard Hill, who persisted in it, with maintaining that, 'Even adultery and murder do not hurt the 'pleasant children, but rather work for their good (4).' —'God sees no sin in believers, whatever sin they 'commit. My sins might displease God; my person 'is always acceptable to him. Though I should out-'sin Manasses, I should not be less a pleasant child,

(1) Checks to Antinom. vol. ii. p. 22. (2) Ibid. page 200.

(3) Ibid. page 215.

(4) Fletcher's Works, vol. iii. page 50. Agricola, one of Luther's first disciples, is called the founder of the Antinomians. These hold that the faithful are bound by no law, either of God or man, and that good works of every kind, are useless to salvation; while Amsdorf, Luther's pot-companion, taught that they are an impediment to salvation. Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. by Maclaine, vol. iv. P. 35. p. 328. Eaton, a Puritan, in his *Honeycomb of Justification*, says: 'Believers ought not to mourn for sin, because it was par-'doned before it was committed.'

'because God always views me in Christ. Hence, in 'the midst of adulteries, murders and incests, he 'can address me with: *Thou art all fair, my love, 'my undefiled, there is no spot in thee* (1).'—'It is a 'most pernicious error of the schoolmen to distinguish 'sins according to the *fact* and not according to the '*person*.'—'Though I blame those who say; *let us sin 'that grace may abound*, yet adultery, incest, and mur- 'der shall, upon the whole, make me *holier on earth* 'and *merrier in heaven*(2).'

These doctrines and practices, casting great disgrace on Methodism, alarmed its founder. He therefore held a synod of his chief preachers, under the title of *A Conference*, in which he and they unanimously abandoned their past *fundamental principles* in the following confession which they made.—'*Quest.* 17. Have 'we not, unawares, leaned too much to Calvinism? '*Ans.* We are afraid we have. *Quest.* 18. Have we 'not also leaned too much to Antinomianism? *Ans.* 'We are afraid we have. *Quest.* 20. What are the 'main pillars of it? *Ans.* 1. That Christ abolished 'the moral law: 2. That Christians therefore are not 'obliged to observe it: 3. That one branch of Chris- 'tian liberty is liberty from observing the Command-

(1) Fletcher, vol. iv. p. 97.

(2) Quoted by Fletcher. See also Daubeny's Guide to the Church, p. 82.

'ments of God,' &c. (1) The publication of this retractation, in 1770, raised the indignation of the more rigid Methodists, namely, the Whitefieldites, Jumpers, &c. all of whom were under the particular patronage of Lady Huntingdon: accordingly her Chaplain, the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley, issued a circular letter by her direction, calling a General Meeting of her connexion, as it is called, at Bristol, to censure this '*dreadful heresy*,' which, as Shirley affirmed, 'injured the very fundamentals of Christianity (2).'

Having exhibited this imperfect sketch of the errors, contradictions, absurdities, impieties, and immoralities, into which numberless Christians, most of them, no doubt, sincere in their belief, have fallen, by pursuing phantoms of their imagination for Divine Illuminations, and adopting a supposed, immediate and personal Revelation as the *Rule of their Faith and Conduct*, I would request any one of your respectable Society, who may still adhere to it, to reconsider the self-evident maxim laid down in the beginning of this letter; namely: *That cannot be the Rule of Faith and Conduct which is liable to lead us, and has led very many well meaning persons into error and impiety:* I would remind him of his frequent mistakes and illusions respecting things of

(1) Apud Whitehead, p. 213. Benson's Apology, p. 208.

(2) Fletcher's Works, vol. ii. p. 5. Whitehead. Nightingale's Portrait of Methodism, p. 463.

a temporary nature: then, painting to his mind the all-importance of ETERNITY, that is of happiness or misery inconceivable and everlasting, I would address him in the words of St. Augustine: 'What is it you 'are trusting to, poor, weak soul, and blinded with 'the mists of the flesh: what is it you are trusting 'to?'

J. M.

LETTER VII.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq. &c.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE just received a letter from Friend Rankin of Wenlock, written much in the style of George Fox, and another from Mr. Ebenezer Topham of Broseley. They both consist of objections to my last letter to you, which they had perused at New Cottage, and the writers of them both request that I would address whatever answer I might give them, to your Villa.

Friend Rankin is sententious yet civil: he asks, 1st, Whether 'Friends at this day and in past times, and 'even the faithful servant of Christ, George Fox, 'have not condemned the vain imaginations of James 'Naylor, Thomas Bushel, John Perot, and the sinful 'doings of many others, through whom the word of 'life was blasphemed in their day among the ungodly?' He asks, 2ndly, Whether 'numberless follies, blasphe-'mies, and crimes have not risen up in the Roman Ca-'tholic, as well as in other Churches?' He asks, 3rdly, Whether 'learned Robert Barclay, in his glorious 'Apology, hath not shewn forth, that; *The testimony*

'*of the spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge* '*of God hath been, is, and can be revealed* and confirmed, 'and this not only by the outward testimony of Scrip- 'ture, but also by that of Tertullian, Hierom, Augus- 'tin, Gregory the Great, Bernard, yea also by Thomas 'à Kempis, F. Pacificus Baker (1), and many others 'of the Popish Communion who, says Robert Barclay, 'have known and tasted the love of God, and felt the 'power and virtue of God's Spirit working within them 'for their salvation?' (2)

I will first consider the arguments of Friend Rankin. I grant him, then, that his Founder, George Fox, does blame certain extravagances of Naylor, Perrot, and others, his followers, at the same time that he boasts of several committed by himself, by Simpson, and others (3): but how does he confute them, and guard others against them?—Why, he calls their authors *Ranters*, and charges them with *Running out* (4)! Now what kind of an argument is this in the mouth of G. Fox against any fanatic, however furious, when he himself has taught him, that he is *to listen to the Spirit of God within himself, in preference to the*

(1) An English Benedictine Monk, author of *Sancta Sophia*, which is quoted at length by Barclay.

(2) Apology, p. 351. (3) See Journal of G. Fox, passim.

(4) Speaking of James Naylor, he says: 'I spake with him, for I saw *he* '*was out* and *wrong*—he slighted what I said, and was *dark* and *much out*.' Journ. p. 220.

authority of any man and of all men, and even of the Gospel? G. Fox was not more strongly moved to believe that he was the *Messenger of Christ*, than J. Naylor was to believe that *he himself was Christ*: nor had he a firmer conviction that the Lord forbad *Hat-worship*, as it is called, *out of prayer*, than J. Perrot (1) and his company had that they were forbidden to use it *in prayer* (2).—2dly, With respect to the excesses and crimes committed by many Catholics of different ranks, as well as by other men, in all ages, I answer, that these have been committed, *not in virtue of their Rule of Faith and Conduct*; but *in direct opposition to it*, as will be more fully seen when we come to treat of that Rule: whereas the extravagances of the Quakers were the *immediate dictates of the imaginary spirit*, which they followed as their *guide*.—Lastly, when the Doctors of the Catholic Church teach us, after the inspired writers, *not to extinguish*, but to *walk in the spirit* of God, they tell us, at the same time, that this Holy

(1) Journ. p. 310. This and another friend, John Love, went on a mission to Rome, to convert the Pope to Quakerism; but His Holiness not understanding English, when they addressed him with some coarse English epithets in St. Peter's Church, they had no better success than a female friend, Mary Fisher, had, who went into Greece to convert the Great Turk. See Sewel's Hist.

(2) 'Now he (Fox) found also that the Lord forbad him to put off his hat 'to any men high or low; and he required to *Thou* and *Thee* every man and 'woman without distinction, and not to bid people, *Good Morrow*, or *Good* '*Evening*; neither might he bow, or scrape with his leg.' Sewel's Hist. p. 18. See there a Dissertation on *Hat-worship*.

Spirit invariably and necessarily leads us to hear the Church, and to practice that humility, obedience, and those other virtues which she constantly inculcates: so that, if it were possible for *an Angel from heaven to preach another gospel than what we have received*, he ought to be rejected, as a spirit of *darkness*. Even Luther, when the Anabaptists first broached many of the leading tenets of the Quakers, required them to demonstrate their pretended commission from God, by incontestable miracles (1), or submit to be guided by his appointed Ministers.

I have now to notice the letter of Mr. Topham (2). Some of his objections have already been answered in my remarks on Mr. Rankin's letter. What I find particular in the former is the following passage: 'Is it 'possible to go against conviction and facts? namely, 'the experience that very many serious Christians feel, 'in *this day of God's power*, that they are made partakers of Christ and of the Holy Ghost? Of very 'many that hear him saying to the melting heart, with 'his still, small, yet penetrating and renovating voice: '*Thy sins are forgiven thee: Be thou clean: Thy faith*

(1) Sleidan.

(2) It was originally intended to insert these and the other letters of the same description: but as this would have rendered the work too bulky; and, as the whole of the objections may be gathered from the answers to them, that intention has been abandoned.

'*hath made thee whole?* If an exterior proof were 'wanting to shew the certainty of this interior con-'viction, I might refer to the conversion and holy life 'of those who have experienced it.'—To this I answer, that the facts and the conviction, which your friend talks of, amount to nothing more than a certain strength of imagination and warmth of sentiment, which may be natural or may be produced by that *lying spirit*, whom God sometimes permits to *go forth*, and to *persuade* the presumptuous to their destruction. 1 *Kings* xxii. 22. I presume Mr. Topham will allow, that no experience he has felt or witnessed exceeds that of Bockhold, or Hacket, or Naylor, mentioned above, who, nevertheless, were confessedly betrayed by it into most horrible blasphemies and atrocious crimes. The virtue most necessary for enthusiasts, because the most remote from them, is an humble diffidence in themselves. When Oliver Cromwel was on his death-bed, Dr. Godwin being present, among other Ministers, prophesied that the Protector would recover: death, however, almost immediately ensuing, the Puritan, instead of acknowledging his error, cast the blame upon Almighty God, exclaiming: 'Lord thou hast deceived 'us; and we have been deceived!' (1) With respect to the alledged purity of Antinomian Saints, I would

(1) See Birch's Life of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 17.

refer to the history of the lives and deaths of many of our English Regicides, the gross immoralities of numberless *Justified Methodists*, described by Fletcher in his *Checks to Antinomianism* (1).

I am, &c.

J. M.

(1) This candid and able writer says: 'The Puritans and first Quakers 'soon got over the edge of internal activity into the smooth and easy path 'of Laodicean formality. Most of us, called Methodists, have already fol- 'lowed them. We fall asleep under the bewitching power; we dream strange 'dreams; our salvation is finished; we have got above legality; we have 'attained Christian liberty; we have nothing to do; our covenant is sure.' Vol. ii. p. 233. He refers to several instances of the most flagitious conduct which human nature is capable of, in persons who had attained to what they call, *finished salvation.*

LETTER VIII.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq.

SECOND FALLACIOUS RULE.

DEAR SIR,

I TAKE it for granted that my answers to Messrs. Rankin and Topham have been communicated to you, and I hope that they, in conjunction with my preceding letters, have convinced those Gentlemen, of what you, Dear Sir, have, all along, been convinced, namely, of the inconsistency and fanaticism of every pretension on the part of individuals, now-a-days, to a new and particular inspiration, as a *Rule of Faith.* The question which remains for our inquiry is, whether the Rule or Method prescribed by the Church of England and other more rational classes of Protestants, or that prescribed by the Catholic Church, is the one designed by our Saviour Christ for finding out his true Religion. You say that the whole of this is comprised in the *Written Word of God,* or *The Bible,* and that *every individual is a judge* for himself of the *sense of the Bible.* Hence in every religious controversy, more especially since the last change of the inconstant Chillingworth (1), Catholics have been stunned with the

(1) Chillingworth was first a Protestant, of the Establishment: he next became a Catholic, and studied in one of our Seminaries. He then returned, in part, to his former Creed: and last of all he gave into Socinianism, which his writings greatly promoted.

cries of jarring Protestant sects and individuals, proclaiming that, *The Bible, The Bible alone is their Religion:* and hence, more particularly at the present day, Bibles are distributed by hundreds of thousands, throughout the Empire and the four quarters of the Globe, as the adequate means of uniting and reforming Christians and of converting infidels. On the other hand, we Catholics hold that *The Word of God in general, both written and unwritten,* in other words, *The Bible and Tradition, taken together, constitute the Rule of Faith or Method appointed by Christ for finding out the true Religion:* and *that, besides the Rule itself, he has provided in his Holy Church, a living, speaking Judge to watch over it and explain it in all matters of controversy.* That the latter, and not the former, is the *True Rule,* I trust I shall be able to prove as clearly as I have proved that *Private Inspiration* does not constitute it: and this I shall prove by means of the two maxims I have, on that occasion, made use of; namely, *The Rule of Faith, appointed by Christ must be* CERTAIN *and* UNERRING, that is to say, *it must be one which is not liable to lead any rational and sincere inquirer into inconsistency or error:* Secondly, this Rule must be UNIVERSAL; that is to say, *it must be proportioned to the abilities and circumstances of the great bulk of mankind.*

I. If Christ had intended that all mankind should

learn his Religion from a *Book*, namely, *The New Testament*, he himself would have written that Book, and would have laid it down, as the first and fundamental precept of his Religion, the obligation of learning to read it: whereas, he never wrote any thing at all, unless perhaps the sins of the Pharisees with his finger upon the dust, *John* viii. 6. (1). It does not even appear that he gave his Apostles any command to write the Gospels; though he repeatedly and emphatically commanded them to preach it, (*Matt.* x.) and that to all the nations of the earth, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. In this ministry they all of them spent their lives, preaching the Religion of Christ in every country from Judea to Spain, in one direction, and to India in another; every where establishing Churches, and *commending their doctrine to faithful men who should be fit to teach others also.* 2 Tim. ii. 2. Only a part of them wrote any thing, and what these did write was, for the most part, addressed to particular persons or congregations, and on particular occasions. The ancient Fathers tell us that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel at the particular request of the Christians of Palestine (2), and that St. Mark composed his at the desire of those

(1) It is agreed upon among the learned, that the supposed letter of Christ to Abgarus King of Edessa, quoted by Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. l. 1. is spurious.

(2) Euseb. l. 3. Hist. Eccl. Chrysos. in Mat. Hom. 1. Iren. l. 3. c. 1. Hieron. de Vir Illust.

at Rome (1). St. Luke addressed his Gospel to an individual, Theophilus, having written it, says the holy Evangelist, because *it seemed good to him to do so. Luke* i. 3. St. John wrote the last of the Gospels in compliance with the petition of the Clergy and people of Lesser Asia (2), to prove, in particular, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, which Cerinthus, Ebion, and other heretics began then to deny. No doubt the Evangelists were moved by the Holy Ghost to listen to the requests of the faithful in writing their respective Gospels; nevertheless there is nothing in these occasions, nor in the Gospels themselves, which indicates that any one of them, or all of them together, contain an entire, detailed, and clear exposition of the whole Religion of Jesus Christ. The Canonical Epistles in the New Testament shew the particular occasions on which they were written, and prove, as the Bishop of Lincoln observes, that 'They are not to be consi-'dered as regular treatises on the Christian Reli-'gion (3).'

II. In supposing our Saviour to have appointed his bare written word for the Rule of our Faith, without any authorized judge to decide on the unavoidable controversies growing out of it, you would suppose

(1) Euseb. l. 2. c. 15. Hist. Eccl. Epiph. Hieron. de Viz Illust.
(2) Euseb. l. 6. Hist. Eccl. Hieron.
(3) Elem. of Chris. Rel. vol. i. p. 277.

that he has acted differently from what common sense has dictated to all other legislators. For where do we read of a legislator, who, after dictating a code of laws, neglected to appoint judges and magistrates to decide their meaning, and to enforce obedience to such decisions. You, Dear Sir, have the means of knowing what would be the consequence of leaving any Act of Parliament concerning taxes, or inclosures, or any other temporal concerns to the interpretation of the individuals whom it regards. Alluding to the Protestant Rule, the illustrious Fenelon has said: 'It is better to 'live without any law, than to have laws which all 'men are left to interpret according to their several 'opinions and interests (1).' The Bishop of London appears sensible of this truth, as far as regards temporal affairs, where he writes: 'In matters of property 'indeed, some decision, right or wrong, must be 'made: society could not subsist without it (2):' just as if peace and unity were less necessary in the *one Sheepfold of the one Shepherd*, the Church of Christ, than they are in civil society!

III. The fact is: this method of determining religious questions by Scripture only, according to each individual's interpretation, whenever and wherever it has been adopted, has always produced endless and in-

(1) Life of Archbp. Fenelon, by Ramsay.
(2) Brief Confut. p. 18.

curable dissensions, and of course errors; because truth is one, while errors are numberless. The ancient Fathers of the Church reproached the sects of heretics and schismatics with their endless internal divisions 'See,' says St. Augustin, 'into how many morsels, 'those are divided, who have divided themselves from 'the unity of the Church!' (1). Another Father writes: 'It is natural for error to be ever changing (2). 'The disciples have the same right in this matter 'that their masters had.'

To speak now of the Protestant Reformers. No sooner had their progenitor, Martin Luther, set up the tribunal of his private judgment on the sense of Scripture, in opposition to the authority of the Church, ancient and modern (3), than his disciples, proceeding on his principle, undertook to prove from plain texts of the Bible that his own doctrine was erroneous, and that the Reformation itself wanted reforming. Carlostad (4), Zuinglius (5), Œcolompadius, Muncer (6), and a hun-

(1) S. Aug.

(2) Tertul. de Præscrip.

(3) This happened in June 1520, on his doctrine being censured by the Pope. Till this time he had submitted it to the judgment of the Holy See.

(4) He was Luther's first disciple of distinction, being Archdeacon of Wittemberg. He declared against Luther in 1521.

(5) Zuinglius began the Reformation in Switzerland some time after Luther began it in Germany, but taught such doctrine that the latter termed him a Pagan, and said, he despaired of his salvation.

(6) He was the disciple of Luther, and founder of the Anabaptists, who in quality of *The Just*, maintained that the property of *The Wicked* belonged

dred more of his followers wrote and preached against him and against each other, with the utmost virulence, still each of them, professing to ground his doctrine and conduct on the written word of God alone. In vain did Luther claim a superiority over them; in vain did he denounce hell-fire against them (1); in vain did he threaten to return back to the Catholic Religion (2): he had put the Bible into each man's hand to explain it for himself: this his followers continued to do in open defiance of him (3); till their mutual contradictions and discords became so numerous and scandalous, as to overwhelm the thinking part of them with grief and confusion (4).

to them, quoting the second Beatitude: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* Muncer wrote to the several Princes of Germany to give up their possessions to him, and, at the head of 40,000 of his followers, marched to enforce this requisition.

(1) He says to them: 'I can defend you against the Pope,—but when 'the devil shall urge against you (the heads of these changes) at your death, 'these passages of Scripture; *they ran and I did not send them*, how shall 'you withstand him! He will plunge you headlong into hell.'—Oper. tom. vii. fol. 274.

(2) 'If you continue in these measures of your common deliberations, I 'will recant whatever I have written or said, and leave you. Mind what 'I say.'—Oper. tom. vii. fol. 276. edit. Wittemb.

(3) See the curious challenge of Luther to Carlostad to write a book against the *Real Presence*, when one wishes the other to *break his neck*, and the other retorts; *may I see thee broken on the wheel.*—Variat. b. ii. n. 12.

(4) Capito, minister of Strasburg, writing to Farel, pastor of Geneva, thus complains to him: 'God has given me to understand the mischief we have 'done by our precipitancy in breaking with the Pope, &c. The people say 'to us: I know enough of the Gospel. I can read it for myself. I have no 'need of you.' Inter Epist. Calvini.—In the same tone Dudith writes to his friend Beza; 'Our people are carried away with every wind of doctrine,

To point out some few of the particular variations alluded to; for to enumerate them all would require a work vastly more voluminous than that of Bossuet on this subject: it is well known that Luther's fundamental principle was that of *imputed justice*, to the exclusion of all acts of virtue and good works whatsoever. His favourite disciple and bottle-companion, Amsdorf, carried this principle so far as to maintain that *Good works are a hinderance to salvation* (1). In vindication of his fundamental tenet, Luther vaunts as follows: 'This article shall remain, 'in spite of all the world: it is I, Martin Luther, 'Evangelist, who say it: let no one therefore attempt 'to infringe it, neither the Emperor of the Romans, 'nor of the Turks, nor of the Tartars; neither the 'Pope, nor the Monks, nor the Nuns, nor the Kings, 'nor the Princes, nor all the Devils in hell. If they 'attempt it, may the infernal flames be their recom-'pense. What I say here is to be taken for an in-

'If you know what their religion is to-day, you cannot tell what it will be 'to-morrow. In what single point are those churches which have declared 'war against the Pope agreed among themselves? There is not one point 'which is not held by some of them as an article of faith, and by others as 'an impiety.' In the same sentiment, Calvin writing to Melancthon, says, 'It is of great importance that the divisions, which subsist among us, 'should not be known to future ages: for nothing can be more ridiculous 'than that we, who have broken off from the whole world, should have 'agreed so ill among ourselves from the very beginning of the Reformation.'

(1) Mosheim Hist. by Maclaine, vol. iv. p. 328. ed. 1790.

'spiration of the Holy Ghost.' Notwithstanding, however, these terrible threats and imprecations of their master, Melancthon, with the rest of the Lutherans, immediately after his death, abandoned this article, and went over to the opposite extreme of Semipelagianism; namely, they not only admitted the necessity of good works, but they also taught that these are prior to God's grace. Still on this single subject Osiander, a Lutheran, says, 'there are twenty several 'opinions, *all drawn from the Scripture*, and held by 'different members of the Augsburg, or Lutheran, 'Confession (1).'

Nor has the unbounded licence of explaining Scripture, each one in his own way, which Protestants claim, been confined to mere errors and dissensions: it has also caused mutual persecution and bloodshed (2): it has produced tumults, rebellions, and anarchy beyond recounting. Dr. Hey asserts, that 'The misinterpretation of Scripture brought on the 'miseries of the Civil War (3); and Lord Clarendon, Madox, and other writers shew that there was

(1) Archdeacon Blackburn's Confessional, p. 16.

(2) See Letters to a Prebendary, chapter, Persecution. Numberless other proofs of Protestants persecuting, not only Catholics, but also their fellow Protestants to death, on account of their religious opinions, can be adduced.

(3) Dr. Hey's Theological Lectures, vol. i. p. 77.

not a crime committed by the Puritan rebels, in the course of it, which they did not profess to justify by texts and instances drawn from the sacred volumes (1). Leland, Bergier, Baruel, Robison, and Kett, abundantly prove that the poisonous plant of infidelity, which has produced such dreadful effects of late years on the continent, was transplanted thither from this Protestant island, and that it was produced, nourished, and increased to its enormous growth by that principle of private judgment in matters of religion, which is the very foundation of the Reformation. Let us hear the two last-mentioned authors, both of them Protestant Clergymen, on this important subject. 'The spirit of free inquiry,' says Kett, quoting Robison, 'was the great boast of the Protestants, and 'their only support against the Catholics; securing 'them, both in their civil and religious rights. It 'was therefore encouraged by their governments, and 'sometimes indulged to excess. In the progress of 'this contest their own Confessions did not escape cen-'sure; and it was asserted, that the Reformation, 'which these Confessions express, was not complete. 'Further Reformation was proposed. The Scriptures, 'the foundation of their faith, were examined by 'clergymen of very different capacities, dispositions,

(1) Hist. of Civ. War. Examin. of Neal's Hist. of Puritans.

'and views, till, by explaining, correcting, allegorizing, 'and otherwise twisting the Bible, men's minds had 'hardly any thing to rest on, as a doctrine of Revealed 'Religion. This encouraged others to go further, and 'to say that Revelation was a solecism, as plainly ap-'pears by the irreconcileable differences among the 'enlighteners of the public, so they were called; and 'that man had nothing to trust to, but the dictates of 'natural reason. Another set of writers, proceeding 'from this as from a point settled, proscribed all Re-'ligion whatever, and openly taught the doctrines of 'Materialism and Atheism. *Most of these innovations 'were the work of Protestant Divines, from the causes 'that I have mentioned.* But the progress of infidelity 'was much accelerated by the establishment of a '*Philanthropine,* or Academy of general Education in 'the principality of Anhalt-Dessau. The professed 'object of this institution was to unite the three 'Christian communions of Germany, and to make it 'possible for the members of them all not only to live 'amicably and to worship God in the same Church, 'but even to communicate together. This attempt 'gave rise to much speculation and refinement; and 'the proposal for the amendment of the Formulas and 'the instructions from the pulpit were prosecuted with 'so much keenness, that the ground-work of Chris-'tianity, was refined and refined till it vanished alto-

'gether, leaving Deism, or natural, or, as it was called, '*Philosophical Religion* in its place. *The Lutherans and* '*Calvinists, prepared by the causes before-mentioned*, to 'become dupes to this masterpiece of art, were en-'ticed by the specious liberality of the scheme, and 'the particular attention which it promised to the 'morals of youth: but *not one Roman Catholic could* '*Basedow allure to his seminary of practical Ethics* (1).'

IV. You have seen, Dear Sir, to what endless errors and impieties the principle of private interpretation of Scripture, no less than that of private inspiration of faith, has conducted men, and of course is ever liable to conduct them; which circumstance, therefore, proves, that it cannot be the Rule for bringing us to religious truths, according to the self-evident maxim stated above. Nor is it to be imagined that, previously to the formation of the different National Churches and other religious associations, which took place in several parts of Europe at what is called "The Reformation," the Scriptures were diligently consulted by the founders of them, and that the ancient system of Religion was exploded, and the new systems adopted, conformably with their apparent sense, as Protestant controvertists would have you believe. No, Sir, Princes and Statesmen had a great

(1) Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy against all Religions, &c. Kett's History the Interpreter of Prophecy, Vol. ii. p. 158.

deal more to do with these changes, than Theologians; and most of the parties concerned in them were evidently pushed on by very different motives from those of Religion. As to Martin Luther, he testifies, and calls God to witness the truth of his testimony, that it was *not willingly* (that is, not from a previous discovery of the falsehood of his religion) but *from accident* (namely, a quarrel with the Dominican Friars, and afterwards with the Pope) that he fell into his broils about religion (1). With respect to the Reformation in our own country, we all know that Henry VIII. who took the first step towards it, was, at the beginning of his reign, so zealous against it, that he wrote a book, which he dedicated to Pope

(1) 'Casu non voluntate in has turmas incidi: Dum testor.'—The Protestant historian, Mosheim, with whom Hume agrees, admits that several 'of the principal agents in this revolution were actuated, more by the 'impulse of passions, and views of interest, than by a zeal for true religion.' Maclaine, vol. iv. p. 135. He had before acknowledged that King Gustavus introduced Lutheranism into Sweden, in opposition to the clergy and bishops, 'not only as agreeable to the genius and spirit of the gospel, 'but also as favourable to the temporal state and political constitution of the 'Swedish dominions,' pp. 79, 80. He adds, that Christiern, who introduced the Reformation into Denmark, was animated by no other motives than those of ambition and avarice, p. 82. Grotius, another Protestant, testifies that it was 'sedition and violence which gave birth to the Reformation in 'his country,' Holland. Append. de Antichristo. The same was the case in France, Geneva, and Scotland. It is to be observed, that in all these countries the reformers, as soon as they got the upper hand, became violent persecutors of the Catholics. Berger defies Protestants to name so much as a town or village in which, when they became masters of it, they tolerated a single Catholic.

Leo X. in opposition to it, and in return obtained for himself and his successors, from this Pontiff, the title of *Defender of the Faith.* Becoming afterwards enamoured of one of his Queen's maids of honour, Ann Bullen, and the reigning Pope refusing to sanction an adulterous marriage with her, he caused a statute to be passed, abrogating the Pope's Supremacy, and declaring himself *Supreme Head of the Church of England* (1). Thus he plunged the nation into schism, and opened a way for every kind of heresy and impiety. In short, nothing is more evident than that the King's inordinate passion, and not the word of God, was the rule followed in this first important change of our National Religion. The unprincipled Duke of Somerset, who next succeeded to supreme power in the church and state, under the shadow of his youthful nephew Edward VI. for his own ambitious and avaricious purposes, pushed on the reformation, so called, much further than it had yet been carried. He suppressed the remaining colleges and hospitals, which the profligacy of Henry had spared, con-

(1) Archbishop Parker records, that the Bishops assembled in Synod in 1531 offered to sign this new title, with the following salvo: '*In quantum* '*per Christi leges licet*:' but that the King would admit of no such modification. Antiq. Brit. p. 325. In the end, they surrendered the whole of their spiritual jurisdiction to him (all except the religious Bishop of Rochester, Fisher, who was put to death for his refusal) and were content to publish *Articles of Religion devised by the King's Highness.* Heylin Hist. of Reform. Collier, &c.

verting their revenues to his own and his associates' uses. He forced Cranmer and the other bishops to take out fresh commissions for governing their dioceses during his nephew's, that is to say, his own *good pleasure* (1). He made a great number of important changes in the public worship by his own authority or that of his visitors (2); and when he employed certain bishops and divines in forming fresh Articles and a new Liturgy, he punished them with imprisonment if they were not obsequious to his orders (3). He even took upon himself to alter their work, when sanctioned by Parliament, in compliment to the Church's greatest enemy, Calvin (4).——Afterwards, when Elizabeth came to the throne, a new Reformation, different in its Articles and Liturgy from that of Ed-

(1) 'Licentiam concedimus ad nostrum beneplacitum dumtaxat duraturam.' Burnet Hist. Ref. Rec. P. II. B. i. N. 2.

(2) See the Injunctions of the Council to Preachers, published before the Parliament met, concerning the Mass in the Latin language, Prayers for the Dead, &c. See also the order sent to the Primate against Palms, Ashes, &c. in Heylin, Burnet, and Collier. The boy Edward VI. just thirteen years old, was taught by his uncle to proclaim as follows: 'We would 'not have our subjects so much to mistake our judgment, &c. as though 'we could not discern what is to be done, &c. God be praised, we know 'what, by his word, is fit to be redressed,' &c. Collier, vol. ii. p. 246.

(3) The Bishops Heath and Gardiner were both imprisoned for non-compliance.

(4) Heylin complains bitterly of Calvin's pragmatical spirit, in quarrelling with the English Liturgy, and soliciting the Protector to alter it. Preface to Hist. of Reform. His letters to Somerset on the subject may be seen in *Fox's Acts and Monum.*

ward VI. was set on foot and moulded, not according to Scripture, but to her orders. She deposed all the bishops except one, '*the calamity of his see*,' as he was called (1); and she required the new ones, whom she appointed, to renounce certain exercises, which they declared to be *agreeable to the Word of God* (2), but which she found not to agree with her system of politics. She even in full Parliament threatened to depose them all, if they did not act conformably to her views (3).

V. The more strictly the subject is examined, the more clearly it will appear, that it was not in consequence of any investigation of the Scriptures, either public or private, that the ancient Catholic Religion was abolished, and one or other of the new Protestant Religions set up in the different northern kingdoms and states of Europe, but in consequence of the politics of princes and statesmen, the avarice of the nobility and gentry, and the irreligion and licentiousness of the people. I will even advance a step further, and affirm that there is no appearance of any indi-

(1) Anthony Kitchin, so called by Godwin, De Præsul, and Camden.

(2) This took place with respect to what was termed *prophesying*, then practised by many Protestants, and defended by Archbishop Grindal and the other bishops, as *agreeable to God's word*: nevertheless, the Queen obliged them to suppress it. Col. Eccl. Hist. P. II. p. 554, &c.

(3) See her curious speech in Parliament, March 25, 1585, in Stow's Annals.

vidual Protestant, to whatever sect he belongs, having formed his creed by the rule of *Scripture alone.* For do you, Sir, really believe that those persons of your communion whom you see the most diligent and devout in turning over their Bibles, have really found out in them the Thirty-nine Articles, or any other creed which they happen to profess? To judge more certainly of this matter, I wish those gentlemen who are the most zealous and active in distributing Bibles among the Indians and Africans in their different countries, would procure from some half dozen of the most intelligent and serious of their proselytes, who have heard nothing of the Christian faith by any other means than their Bibles, a summary of what they respectively understand to be the doctrine and the morality taught in that sacred volume. What inconsistent and nonsensical symbols should we not witness! The truth is, Protestants are tutored from their infancy, by the help of catechisms and creeds, in the systems of their respective sects; they are guided by their parents and masters, and are influenced by the opinions and example of those with whom they live and converse; some particular texts of Scripture are strongly impressed upon their minds, and others of an *apparent* different meaning are kept out of their view or glossed over; and above all, it is constantly inculcated to them, that their religion is built upon Scrip-

ture alone: hence, when they actually read the Scriptures, they fancy they see there what they have been otherwise taught to believe; the Lutheran, for example, that Christ is really present in the Sacrament; the Calvinist, that he is as far distant from 'it, as heaven 'is from earth;' the Churchman, that Baptism is necessary for infants; the Baptist that it is an impiety to confer it upon them; and so of all the other forty sects of Protestants enumerated by Evans in his *Sketch of the different Denominations of Christians*, and of twice forty other sects whom he omits to mention.

When I remarked that our blessed Master Jesus Christ wrote no part of the New Testament himself, and gave no orders to his Apostles to write it, I ought to have added that, if he had intended it, together with the Old Testament, to be the sole Rule of Religion, he would have provided means for their being able to follow it; knowing, as he certainly did, that 99 in every 100, or rather 999 in every 1000, in *different ages and countries*, would not be able to read at all, and much less to comprehend a page of the sacred writings: yet no such means were provided by him: nor has he so much as enjoined it to his followers in general to study letters.

Another observation on this subject, and a very obvious one is, that among those Christians, who pro-

fess that the Bible alone is the Rule of their Religion, there ought to be no Articles, no Catechisms, no Sermons, nor other instructions. True it is, that the abolition of these, however incompatible they are with the Rule itself, would quickly undermine the Established Church, as its Clergy now begin to understand, and, if universally carried into effect, would, in the end, efface the whole doctrine and morality of the Gospel (1): but this consequence only shews more clearly the falsehood of that exclusive rule. In fact, the most enlightened Protestants find themselves here in a dilemma, and are obliged to say and unsay, to the amusement of some persons and the pity of others (2). They cannot abandon the Rule of *the Bible alone*, as explained by each one for himself, without proclaiming their guilt in refusing to hear the Catholic Church, and they cannot adhere to it, without opening the flood

(1) The Protestant writers, Kett and Robison, have shewn, in the passage above quoted, how the principle of private judgment tends to undermine Christianity at large; and Archdeacon Hook, in his late Charge shews, by an exact statement of capital convictions in different years, that the increase of immorality has kept pace with that of the Bible Societies.

(2) One of the latest instances of the distress in question was exhibited by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Marsh. In his publication, *The Inquiry*, p. 4. he said very truly, that 'the poor (who constitute the bulk of mankind) cannot 'without assistance understand the Scriptures:' Being congratulated on this important, yet unavoidable concession, by the Rev. Mr. Gandolphy, he tacks about in a public letter to that Gentleman, and says, that what he wrote in his *Inquiry* concerning the necessity of a further rule than mere Scripture only regards the *establishment* of religion, not the *truth* of it: just as if that rule were sufficient to conduct the people to the *truth of Religion*, while he expressly says they *cannot understand it*.

gates to all the impiety and immorality of the age upon their own communion.—I shall have occasion hereafter to notice the claims of the Established Church to authority, in determining the sense of Scripture, as well as in other religious controversies: in the mean time I cannot but observe that her most able defenders are frequently obliged to abandon their own, and adopt the Catholic Rule of Faith. The judicious Hooker, in his defence of the Church of England, writes thus: 'Of this 'we are right sure that nature, Scripture, and experience 'itself have taught the world to seek for the ending of 'contentions by submitting to some judicial and de-'finite sentence, whereunto neither parties that con-'tendeth, may, under any pretence or colour, refuse 'to stand. This must needs be effectual and strong. As 'for other means, without this, they seldom prevail(1).' Another most clear-headed writer, and renowned defender of the Establishment, whom I had the happiness of being acquainted with, Dr. Balguy (2), thus expresses himself in a *Charge to the Clergy* of his Archdeaconry: 'The opinions of the people are and must be 'founded more on authority than reason. Their parents,

(1) Hooker's Eccles. Politic. Pref. art. 6.

(2) Discourses on various Subjects, by T. Balguy, D. D. Archdeacon and Prebendary of Winchester. Some of these Discourses were preached at the consecration of Bishops, and published by order of the Archbishop; some in Charges to the Clergy. The whole of them is dedicated to the King, whom the writer thanks for naming him to a high dignity (the Bishopric of Gloucester), and for permitting him to decline accepting of it.

'their teachers, their governors, in a great measure, 'determine for them, what they are to believe and 'what to practise. The same doctrines, uniformly 'taught, the same rites constantly performed, make 'such an impression on their minds, that they hesitate 'as little in admitting the articles of their faith, as in 'receiving the most established maxims of common 'life(1).' With such testimonies before your eyes, can you, Dear Sir, imagine that the bulk of Protestants have formed their religion by the standard of Scripture? He goes on to say, speaking of controverted points: 'Would you have them (the people) think for 'themselves? Would you have them hear and decide 'the controversies of the learned? Would you have 'them enter into the depths of criticism, of logic, of 'scholastic divinity? You might as well expect 'them to compute an eclipse, or decide between the 'Cartesian and Newtonian philosophy. Nay, I will 'go farther: for I take upon myself to say, there are 'more men capable, in some competent degree, of 'understanding Newton's philosophy, than of forming 'any judgment at all concerning the abstruser questions in metaphysics and theology.' Yet the persons, of whom the doctor particularly speaks, were all furnished with Bibles; and the abstruse questions, which he refers to, are: 'Whether Christ did or did not come

(1) Discourses on various Subjects, by T. Balguy, D. D. p. 257.

'down from heaven?' whether 'he died or did not 'die for the sins of the world?' whether 'he sent his 'Holy Spirit to assist and comfort us, or whether he 'did not send him (1)?' The learned Doctor elsewhere expresses himself still more explicitly on the subject of Scripture, without Church authority. He is combatting the Dissenters, but his weapons are evidently as fatal to his own Church as to theirs. 'It has long been held among them that Scripture only 'is the rule and test of all religious ordinances; and 'that human authority is to be altogether excluded. 'Their ancestors, I believe, would have been not a 'little embarrassed with their own maxim, if they had 'not possessed a *singular talent of seeing every thing* '*in Scripture which they had a mind to see.* Almost 'every sect could find there its own peculiar form of 'church-government; and *while they inforced only* '*their own imaginations, they believed themselves to be* '*executing the decrees of heaven* (2).'

I conclude this long letter with a passage to the present purpose from our admired theological poet:

'As long as words a different sense will bear,
'And each may be his own interpreter,
'Our airy faith will no foundation find:
'The words a weathercock for every wind (3).'

I am, Dear Sir, &c.

J. M.

(1) Discourses on various Subjects, by T. Balguy, D. D. p. 257.
(2) Discourse VII. p. 126. (3) Dryden's Hind and Panther, Part II.

LETTER IX.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq. &c.

SECOND FALSE RULE.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER all that I have written concerning the Rule of Faith, adopted by yourself and other more rational Protestants, I have only yet treated of the extrinsic arguments against it. I now therefore proceed to investigate its *intrinsic nature*, in order to shew more fully the inadequacy, or rather the falsehood of it.

When an English Protestant gets possession of an English Bible, printed by Thomas Basket, or other 'Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty,' he takes it in hand with the same confidence, as if he had immediately received it from the Almighty himself, as Moses received the Tables of the Law on Mount Sina, amidst thunder and lightning. But how vain is this confidence, whilst he adheres to the foregoing Rule of Faith! How many questionable points does he assume, as proved, which cannot be proved, without relinquishing his own principles and adopting ours!

I. Supposing then you, Dear Sir, to be the Protestant I have been speaking of; I begin with asking you: by what means have you learnt the *Canon* of Scripture, that is to say, which are the books that have

been written by Divine Inspiration; or indeed that any books at all, have been so written? You cannot discover either of these things by your Rule, because the Scripture, as your great authority Hooker shews (1) and Chillingworth allows, cannot bear testimony to itself. You will say that the Old Testament was written by Moses and the Prophets, and the New Testament by the Apostles of Christ and the Evangelists. But admitting all this; it does not of itself prove that they *always* wrote, or indeed that they ever wrote under the influence of *inspiration.* They were, by nature, fallible men: how have you learnt that they were infallible writers. In the next place you receive books, as canonical parts of the Testament which were not written by Apostles at all; namely, the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, whilst you reject an authentic work of great excellence (2), written by one who is termed in Scripture *an Apostle* (3) and declared to be *full of the Holy Ghost* (4), I speak of St. Barnaby. Lastly, you have no sufficient authority for asserting that the sacred volumes are the genuine composition of the holy personages whose names they bear, except the tradition and living voice of the Catholic Church, since numerous apochryphal Prophecies and spurious

(1) Eccles. Polit. b. iii. sec. 8.
(2) St. Barnaby. See Grabe's Spicileg. and Cotlerus's Collect.
(3) Acts xiv. 24. (4) Acts xi. 24.

Gospels and Epistles, under the same or equal venerable names, were circulated in the Church, during its early ages, and accredited by different learned writers and holy Fathers: while some of the really canonical books were rejected or doubted of by them. In short, it was not until the end of the fourth century that the genuine Canon of Holy Scripture was fixed: and then it was fixed by the *tradition and authority of the Church*, declared in the Third Council of Carthage and a Decretal of P. Innocent I. Indeed it is so clear that the Canon of Scripture is built on the Tradition of the Church, that most learned Protestants (1), with Luther himself, have (2) been forced to acknowledge it, in terms almost as strong as those in the well-known declaration of St. Augustine (3).

II. Again; supposing the Divine authority of the Sacred Books themselves to be established; how do you know that the copies of them translated and printed in your Bible are authentic? It is agreed upon amongst the learned that the original text of Moses and the ancient prophets was destroyed with the Temple and city of Jerusalem by the Assyrians under Ne-

(1) Hooker, Eccl. Polit. C. iii. S. 8. Dr. Lardner, in Bishop Watson's Col. vol. ii. p. 20.

(2) 'We are obliged to yield many things to the Papists—that with them 'is the Word of God, which we received from them; otherwise we should 'have known nothing at all about it.' Comment. on John c. 16.

(3) 'I should not believe the Gospel itself, if the authority of the Catholic 'Church did not oblige me to do so.' Contra Epist. Fundam.

buchadnezzar (1); and, though they were replaced by authentic copies, at the end of the Babylonish captivity, through the pious care of the Prophet Esdras or Ezra, yet that these also perished in the subsequent persecution of Antiochus (2); from which time we have no evidence of the authenticity of the Old Testament till this was supplied by Christ and his Apostles, who transmitted it to the Church. In like manner, granting, for example, that St. Paul wrote an inspired Epistle to the Romans and another to the Ephesians; yet as the former was entrusted to an individual, the Deaconess Phebe, to be conveyed by her to its destination (3), and the latter to his disciple, Tychicus (4), for the same purpose, it is impossible for you to entertain a rational conviction that these Epistles as they stand in your Testament, are exactly in the state in which they issued from the Apostle's pen, or that they are his genuine Epistles at all, without recurring to the tradition and authority of the Catholic Church concerning them. To make short of this matter, I will not lead you into the labyrinth of Biblical criticism, nor will I shew you the endless varieties of readings with respect to words and whole passages, which occur in different copies of the Sacred Text, but will here content myself with referring you to your own Bible Book, as printed by

(1) Brett's Dissert. in Bishop Watson's Collect. vol. iii. p. 5.
(2) Ibid. (3) Rom. xvi. See Calmet, &c. (4) Ephes. vi. 21.

authority. Look then at Psalm xiv, as it occurs in The Book of Common Prayer, to which your Clergy swear their 'consent and assent;' then look at the same Psalm in your Bible: you will find four whole verses in the former, which are left out of the latter! What will you here say, Dear Sir? You must say that your Church has added to, or else that she has *taken away from the words of this Prophecy* (1)!

III. But your pains and perplexities concerning your Rule of Faith must not stop even at this point: for though you had demonstrative evidence, that the several books in your Bible are Canonical and authentic, in the originals, it would still remain for you to inquire whether or no they are *faithfully translated in your English copy.* In fact you are aware that they were written, some of them in Hebrew and some of them in Greek, out of which languages they were translated, for the last time, by about fifty different men, of various capacities, learning, judgment, opinions, and prejudices (2). In this inquiry the Catholic Church herself can afford you no security to build your faith upon; much less can any private individuals

(1) The verses in question being quoted by St. Paul, Rom. iii. 13, &c. there is no doubt but the Common Bible is *defective* in this passage.—On the other hand, the Bishop of Lincoln has published his conviction that the most important passage in the New Testament, 1 John v. 7, for establishing the Divinity of Jesus Christ 'is spurious.' Elem. of Theo. vol. ii. p. 90.

(2) See a list of them in Ant. Johnson's Hist. Account. Theo. Collect. p. 95.

whosoever. The celebrated Protestant Divine, Episcopius, was so convinced of the fallibility of modern translations, that he wanted all sorts of persons, labourers, sailors, women, &c. to learn Hebrew and Greek. Indeed it is obvious that the sense of a text may depend upon the choice of a single word in the translation: nay, it sometimes depends upon the mere *punctuation* of a sentence, as may be seen below (1). Can you then, consistently, reject the authority of the great Universal Church, and yet build upon that of some obscure translator in the reign of James I.? No, Sir, you must yourself have compared your English Bible with the originals, and have proved it to be a faithful version, before you can build your faith upon it as upon *The Word of God.*—To say one word now of the Bibles themselves, which have been published by authority, or generally used by Protestants in this country: Those of Tindal, Coverdale and Queen Elizabeth's Bishops, were so notoriously corrupt, as to cause a general outcry against them among learned Protestants, as well as among Catholics, in which the King (James I.) joined himself (2), who accordingly ordered

(1) One of the strongest passages for the Divinity of Christ is the following, as it is pointed in the Vulgate: *Ex quibus est Christus, secundum carnem, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in sæcula.* Rom. ix. 5. But see how Grotius and Socinus deprive the text of all its strength by merely substituting a point for a comma: *Ex quibus est Christus, secundum carnem. Qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in sæcula.*

(2) Bishop Watson's Collect. vol. iii. p. 93.

a new version of it to be made, being the same that is now in use, with some few alterations made after the Restoration (1). Now though these new translators have corrected many wilful errors of their predecessors, most of which were levelled at Catholic doctrines and discipline (2); yet they have left a sufficient number of these behind, for which I do not find that their advocates offer any excuse (3).

IV. I will make a further supposition, namely, that you had the certainty even of Revelation, as the Calvinists used to pretend they had, that your Bible is not only *Canonical, authentic, and faithful*, in its English garb; yet what would all this avail you, towards establishing your Rule of Faith, unless you could be equally certain of your *understanding the whole of it rightly?* For, as the learned Protestant Bishop Walton says (4): 'The Word of God does not consist 'in mere letters, whether written or printed, but in

(1) Ibid.

(2) These may be found in the learned Greg. Martin's Treatise on the subject, and in Ward's Errata to the Protestant Bible.

(3) Two of these I had occasion to notice in the *Inquiry into the Character of the Irish Catholics*, namely, 1 *Cor.* xi. 27, where the conjunctive *and* is put for the disjunctive *or*, and *Mat.* xix. 11, where *cannot* is put for *do not*, to the altering of the sense in both instances. Now, though these corruptions stand in direct opposition to the original, as the Rev. Mr. Grier and Dr. Ryan themselves quote it; yet these writers have the confidence to deny they are corruptions, because they pretend to prove from other texts that *the cup is necessary*, and that *continency is not necessary!!* Answer to Ward's Errata, p. 13, page 33.

(4) In the Prolegomena to his Poliglott, cap. v.

'the true sense of it (1); which no one can better 'interpret than the true Church, to which Christ 'committed this sacred pledge.' This is exactly what St. Jerom and St. Augustin had said many ages before him. 'Let us be persuaded,' says the former, 'that the Gospel consists not in the words, but in the 'sense. A wrong explanation turns the Word of God 'into the word of man, and what is worse, into the 'word of the Devil; for the Devil himself could quote 'the text of Scripture (2).' Now that there are in Scripture *things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction*, is expressly affirmed in it (3). The same thing is proved by the frequent mistakes of the Apostles themselves, with respect to the words of their Divine Master. These obscurities are so numberless throughout the sacred volumes, that the last quoted Father, who was as bright and learned a Divine, as ever took the Bible in hand, says of it: 'There are more things in 'Scripture that I am ignorant of than those I know (4).' Should you prefer a modern Protestant authority to an ancient Catholic one; listen to the clear-headed Dr. Balguy. His words are these: 'But what, you will

(1) This obvious truth shews the extreme absurdity of our Bible Societies and modern schools which regard nothing but the mere *reading of the Bible*, leaving persons to embrace the most opposite interpretations of the same texts.

(2) In. Ep. ad Galat. contra Lucif. (3) 2 Pet. iii. 16.

(4) St. Aug. Ep. ad Januar.

'reply, is all this to Christians? to those who see by a 'clear and strong light, the dispensation of God to 'mankind? We are not *as those who have no* hope. '*The Day-spring from on high hath visited us. The* '*spirit of God shall lead us into all truth.*—To this de-'lusive dream of human folly, founded only on mista-'ken interpretations of Scripture; I answer, in one 'word: Open your Bibles: take the first page that 'occurs in either Testament, and tell me, without dis-'guise; is their nothing in it too hard for your under-'standing? If you find all before you *clear* and *easy*, 'you may thank God for giving you a privilege which 'he has denied to many thousands of sincere be-'lievers (1).'

Manifold is the cause of the obscurity of Holy Writ; 1st, the sublimity of a considerable part of it, which speaks either literally or figuratively of the Deity and his attributes; of the Word Incarnate; of Angels and other spiritual beings:—2dly, the mysterious nature of prophecy in general:—3dly, the peculiar idioms of the Hebrew and Greek languages:—lastly, the numerous and bold figures of speech, such as allegory, irony, hyperbole, catachresis, antiphrasis, which are so frequent with the sacred penmen, particularly the ancient prophets (2). I should like to hear any one of those,

(1) Dr. Balguy's Discourses, p. 133.

(2) See examples of these in Bonfrerius's Præloquia and in the Appendixes to them, at the end of Menochius.

who pretend to find the Scripture so easy, attempting to give a clear explanation of the 67th, alias the 68th, Psalm; or the last chapter of Ecclesiastes. Is it an easy matter to reconcile certain well-known speeches of each of the Holy Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the incommutable precept of truth? I may here notice, among a thousand other such difficulties, that when our Saviour sent his twelve Apostles to preach the Gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he told them, according to *St. Mathew* x. 10, to *Provide neither gold nor silver—neither shoes nor yet staves:* whereas *St. Mark* vi. says: *He commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only.*—You may indeed answer, with Chillingworth and Bishop Porteus, that whatever obscurities there may be in certain parts of Scripture, it is clear in all that is necessary to be known.—But on what authority do these writers ground this maxim? They have none at all; but they *beg the question*, as logicians express it, to extricate themselves from an absurdity, and in so doing they overturn their fundamental Rule. They profess to gather their articles of faith and morals from mere Scripture: nevertheless, confessing that they understand only a part of it; they presume to make a distinction in it, and to say this part is necessary to be known, the other part is not necessary. But to place this matter in a clearer light, it is obvious that

if any articles are particularly necessary to be known and believed, they are those which point to the God whom we are to adore, and the moral precepts which we are to observe. Now, is it demonstratively evident, from *mere Scripture*, that Christ is God, and to be adored as such? Most modern Protestants of eminence answer NO; and, in defence of their assertion, quote the following among other texts: *The Father is greater than I*, John xiv. 28; to which the orthodox Divines oppose those texts of the same Evangelist, *I and the Father are one*, x. 30.—*The Word was God*, &c. i. 1.—Again, we find the following among the moral precepts of the Old Testament: *Go thy way; eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart: for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest*, &c. Eccles. ix. 7, 8, 9. In the New Testament we meet with the following seemingly practical commands. *Swear not at all*, Mat. v. 34. *Call no man Father upon earth—neither be you called Masters, for one is your Master, Christ*, Mat. xxiii. 9, 10. *If any man sue thee at law, to take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also*, v. 46. *Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask him not again*, Luke vi. 33. *When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren*, xiv. 12.—These are a few among hundreds

of other difficulties, regarding our moral duties, which, though confronted by other texts, seemingly of a contrary meaning, nevertheless shew that the Scripture is not, of itself, demonstratively clear in points of first rate importance, and that the Divine Law, like human laws, without an authorised interpreter, must ever be a source of doubt and contention.

V. I have said enough concerning the *contentions* among Protestants, I will now, by way of concluding this letter, say a word or two of their *doubts*. In the first place, it is certain, as a learned Catholic controvertist argues (1), that a person who follows your Rule *cannot make an act of faith*, this being, according to your great authority, Bishop Pearson, an assent to the revealed articles, with a *certain and full persuasion* of their revealed truth (2): or, to use the words of your Primate, Wake: 'When I give my assent to what God 'has revealed, I do it, not only with a *certain assurance* 'that what I believe *is true*, but with an *absolute se-* '*curity that it cannot be false* (3).' Now the Protestant, who has nothing to trust to but his own talents in interpreting the Books of Scripture, especially with all the difficulties and uncertainties which he labours under, according to what I have shewn above, never

(1) Sheffmacher *Lettres d'un Docteur Cat. à un Gentilhomme Prot.* vol. i. p. 48.

(2) On the Creed, p. 15. (3) Princip. of Christ. Rel. p. 27.

can rise to this *certain assurance* and *absolute security*, as to what is revealed in Scripture: the utmost he can say is: *such and such appears to me, at the present moment, to be the sense of the texts before me:* and, if he is candid, he will add: *but perhaps, upon further consideration, and upon comparing these with other texts, I may alter my opinion.* How far short, Dear Sir, is such mere opinion from the certainty of faith! I may here refer you, to your own experience: are you accustomed in reading your Bible to conclude, in your own mind, with respect to those points which appear to you most clear: *I believe in these, with a certain assurance of their truth, and an absolute security that they cannot be false;* especially when you reflect that other learned, intelligent, and sincere Christians have understood those passages in quite a different sense from what you do. For my part, having sometimes lived and conversed familiarly with Protestants of this description, and noticed their controversial discourses, I never found one of them absolutely fixed for any long time together, in his mind, as to the whole of his belief. I invite you to make the experiment on the most intelligent and religious Protestant of your acquaintance. Ask him a considerable number of questions, on the most important points of his religion: note down his answers, while they are fresh in your memory. Ask him the same questions, but in a different order, a

month afterwards, when, I can almost venture to say, you will be surprised at the difference you will find, between his former and his latter creed.—After all, we need not use any other means to discover the state of doubt and uncertainty in which many of your greatest Divines and most profound Scriptural Students have passed their days, than to look into their publications. I shall satisfy myself with citing the Pastoral Charge of one of them, a living Bishop to his Clergy. Speaking of the Christian doctrines he says: 'I think it safer 'to tell you, *where they are contained*, than, *what they* '*are*. They are contained in the Bible, and if, in reading 'that book, your sentiments concerning the doctrines 'of Christianity should be different from those of your 'neighbour, or from *those of the Church*, be persuaded 'on your part, that infallibility appertains as little to 'you as it does to the Church (1).' Can you read this, my Dear Sir, without shuddering? If a most learned and intelligent Bishop and Professor of Divinity, as Dr. Watson certainly is, after studying all the Scriptures and all the Commentators upon them, is forced publicly to confess to his assembled clergy, that *he cannot tell them what the doctrines of Christianity are*, how unsettled must his mind have been! and of course, how far removed from the assurance of faith! In the next place, how fallacious must that Rule of *the mere*

(1) Bishop Watson's Charge to his Clergy, in 1795.

Bible be, which, while he recommends it to them, he plainly signifies, will not lead them to a uniformity of sentiments, one with another, nor even with their Church!

There can be no doubt, Sir, but those who entertain doubts concerning the truth of their religion, in the course of their lives, must experience the same, with redoubled anxiety, at the approach of death. Accordingly there are, I believe, few of our Catholic priests in an extensive ministry, who have not been frequently called in to receive dying Protestants into the Catholic Church (1), while not a single instance of a Catholic wishing to die in any other communion than his own can be produced (2). O death, thou great enlightener! O truth-telling death, how powerful art thou in confuting the blasphemies, and dissipating the prejudices of the enemies of God's Church!—

(1) A large proportion of those Grandees who were the most forward in promoting the Reformation, so called, and among the rest Cromwell, Earl of Essex, the King's Ecclesiastical Vicar, when they came to die, returned to the Catholic Church. This was the case also with Luther's chief protector, the Elector of Saxony, the persecuting Queen of Navarre, and many other foreign Protestant Princes. Some Bishops of the Established Church; for instance, Goodman and Cheyney of Gloucester, and Gordon of Glasgow, probably also Halifax of St. Asaph's, died Catholics. A long list of titled or otherwise distinguished personages, who have either returned to the Catholic faith, or, for the first time, embraced it on their death-beds, in modern times, might be named here, if it were prudent to do so.

(2) This is remarked by Sir Toby Mathews, son of the Archbishop of York, Hugh Cressy, Canon of Windsor and Dean of Laughlin, F. Walsingham, and Ant. Ulric Duke of Brunswick, all illustrious converts. Also by Beurier in his *Conferences*, p. 400.

Taking it for granted, that you, Dear Sir, have not been without your doubts and fears about the safety of the road in which you are walking to eternity, more particularly in the course of the present controversy, and being anxious, beyond expression, that you should be free from these when you arrive at the brink of that vast ocean, I cannot do better than address you in the words of the great St. Augustin, to one in your situation: 'If you think you have been sufficiently 'tossed about, and wish to see an end to your an-'xieties, follow the rule of Catholic discipline, which 'came down to us through the apostles from Christ 'himself, and which shall descend from us to the 'latest posterity (1).' Yes, renounce the fatal and foolish presumption of fancying that you can interpret the Scripture better than the Catholic Church, aided, as she is, by the tradition of all ages, and the *Spirit of all truth* (2).—But I mean to treat this latter subject at due length in my next letter.

I am,

Dear Sir, &c.

J. M.

(1) De Utilit. Cred. c. 8.

(2) Bossuet in his celebrated *Conference with Claude*, which produced the conversion of Mlle. Duras, obliged him to confess that, by the Protestant Rule, 'every artisan and husbandman may and ought to believe that he can 'understand the Scriptures better than all the Fathers and Doctors of the 'Church, ancient and modern, put together.'

LETTER X.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq. &c.

THE TRUE RULE.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received your letter, and also two others from gentlemen of your Society, on what I have written to you concerning the insufficiency of Scripture, interpreted by individuals, to constitute a secure Rule of Faith. From these it is plain that my arguments have produced a considerable sensation in the Society; insomuch that I find myself obliged to remind them of the terms on which we mutually entered upon this correspondence, namely, that each one should be at perfect liberty to express his sentiments on the important subject under consideration, without complaint or offence of the other. The strength of my arguments is admitted by you all: yet you all bring invincible objections, as you consider them, from Scripture and other sources against them. I think it will render our controversy more simple and clear if, with your permission, I defer answering these, till after I have said all that I have to say concerning the Catholic Rule of Faith.

The Catholic Rule of Faith, as I stated before, is not merely *The Written Word of God*, but *The Whole Word of God, both Written and Unwritten;* in other words *Scripture and Tradition*, and these *propounded and explained by the Catholic Church*. This implies that we have *a two-fold Rule*, or *Law*, and that we have *an Interpreter*, or *Judge*, to *explain it*, and to decide upon it in all doubtful points.

I. I enter upon this subject with observing that all *written laws*, necessarily suppose the existence of *unwritten laws*, and indeed depend upon them for their force and authority. Not to run into the depths of ethics and metaphysics on this subject; you know, Dear Sir, that, in this kingdom, we have *Common* or *Unwritten Law*, and *Statute* or *Written Law*, both of them binding; but that the former necessarily precedes the latter. The Legislature, for example, makes a written statute, but we must learn before hand, from the common law, *what constitutes the Legislature*, and we must also have learnt from the Natural and the Divine Laws, that *the Legislature is to be obeyed in all things which these do not render unlawful*. 'The municipal law, of England,' says Judge Blackstone, 'may be divided unto *Lex Non Scripta*, the Unwritten 'or Common Law, and the *Lex Scripta*, or Statute 'Law(1).' He afterwards calls the Common Law,

(1) Comment. on the Laws, Introduct. sect. 3.

'the first ground and chief corner-stone of the Laws 'of England (1).' If, continues he, 'The question 'arises: *how these customs or maxims are to be known,* 'and *by whom their validity are to be determined?* The 'answer is: *by the Judges in the several courts of* '*justice. They* are the *depositaries of the laws,* the '*living oracles,* who must *decide in all cases of doubt,* 'and who are *bound* by oath to decide according to 'the law of the land (2).'—So absurd is the idea of binding mankind by written laws, *without laying an adequate foundation* for the authority of those laws, and without constituting *living judges* to decide upon them!

Neither has the Divine Wisdom, in founding the spiritual kingdom of his Church, acted in that inconsistent manner. The Almighty did not send a Book, the New Testament, to Christians, and, without so much as establishing the authority of that Book, leave them to interpret it, till the end of time, each one according to his own opinions or prejudices. But our Blessed Master and Legislator, Jesus Christ, having first demonstrated his own divine legation from his heavenly Father by undeniable miracles, commissioned his chosen Apostles, *by word of mouth,* to proclaim and explain, *by word of mouth,* his doctrines and

(1) Comment. on the Laws, Introduct. sect. iii. p. 73. 8th edit.
(2) Ibid. p. 69.

precepts to all nations, promising to be with them in the execution of this office of his heralds and judges, even *to the end of the world.* This implies the power, he had given them, of ordaining successors in this office, as they themselves were only to live the ordinary term of human life. True it is that, during the execution of their commission, he inspired some of them and their disciples to write certain parts of these doctrines and precepts, namely, the Canonical Gospels and Epistles, which they addressed, for the most part, to particular persons and on particular occasions: but these inspired writings, by no means, rendered void Christ's commission to the Apostles and their successors, of *preaching* and *explaining his word* to the nations, or his promise of *being with them* till the end of time. On the contrary, the inspiration of these very writings is not otherwise known than by the *viva voce* evidence of these depositaries and judges of the revealed truths.—This Analysis of Revealed Religion, so conformable to Reason and the Civil Constitution of our country, is proved to be true, by *The Written Word* itself—by the *Tradition and conduct of the Apostles*—and by the constant testimony and practice of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church in all ages.

II. Nothing then, Dear Sir, is further from the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church than to slight the Holy Scriptures. So far from this, she had

religiously preserved and perpetuated them from age to age, during almost 1500 years, before Protestants existed. She has consulted them, and confirmed her decrees from them in her several councils. She enjoins her Pastors, whose business it is to instruct the faithful, to read and study them without intermission, knowing, that *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Finally, she proves her perpetual right to announce and explain the truths and precepts of her Divine Founder, by several of the strongest and clearest passages contained in Holy Writ (1). Such, for example, is the last commission of Christ, alluded to above: *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all the things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo! I am with you all days, even to the end of the world.* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And again: *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.* Mark xvi. 15. It is *preaching* and *teaching* then, that is to say the *Unwritten Word,* which Christ has appointed to be the general method of propagating his divine truths; and, whereas he promises to be *with his Apostles to the end*

(1) St. Austin uses this argument against the Donatists, 'In Scripturis 'discimus Christum in scripturis discimus Ecclesiam. Si Christum teneatis, 'quare Ecclesiam non tenetis.'

Pet Leo Inv.t W. Radclyffe Sc.t

GO YE INTO THE WHOLE WORLD AND PREACH
THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

Mark XVI. XV.

Printed by W & T. Radclyffe.

of the world: this proves *their authority* in expounding, and that the same was to *descend to their legitimate successors* in the sacred ministry, since they themselves were only to live the ordinary term of human life. In like manner the following clear texts prove the authority of the Apostles and their successors *for ever;* that is to say, of *the everliving and speaking tribunal of the Church,* in expounding our Saviour's doctrine: *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.—The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name; he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* John xiv. 16, 26. St. Paul, speaking of both the Unwritten and the Written Word, puts them upon a level, where he says: *Therefore, Brethren, stand fast and hold the tradition ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.* 2 Thess. v. 13. Finally, St. Peter pronounces that: *No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.* 2 Pet. i. 20.

III. That the Apostles and the Apostolical men, whom they formed, followed this method prescribed by their Master, is unquestionable; and we have positive proofs from Scripture, as well as from ecclesiastical history, that they did so. St. Mark, after recording the above-cited admonition of *preaching the Gospel,* which Christ left to his Apostles, adds: *And they went*

forth and preached every where; the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Mark xvi. 20. St. Peter preached throughout Judea, and Syria, and last of all in Italy and at Rome; St. Paul throughout Lesser Asia, Greece, and as far as Spain; St. Andrew penetrated into Scythia; St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew into Parthia and India, and so of the others; every where converting and instructing thousands, *by word of mouth;* founding Churches, and ordaining Bishops and Priests to do the same (1). If any of them wrote, it was on some particular occasion, and, for the most part, to a particular person, or congregation, without either giving directions, or providing means of communicating their Epistles or their Gospels to the rest of the Christians throughout the world. Hence it happened, as I have before remarked, that it was not till the end of the fourth century, that the Canon of Holy Scriptures was absolutely settled as it now stands. True it is, that the Apostles, before they separated to preach the Gospel to different nations, agreed upon a short symbol or profession of Faith, called, *The Apostles' Creed;* but even this they did not commit

(1) *They ordained them Priests in every Church.* Acts xiv. 22. *For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldest ordain Priests in every city, as I had appointed thee.* Tit. i. 5. *The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to those faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* 2 Tim. ii. 2.

to writing (1): and whereas they made this, among other articles of it, *I believe in the Holy Church* (2), *they made no mention at all of the Holy Scriptures.* This circumstance confirms what their example proves, that the Christian doctrine and discipline might have been propagated and preserved by the *Unwritten Word*, or Tradition, joined with the authority of the Church, though the Scriptures had not been composed; however *profitable* these most certainly are *for doctrine, for reproof, for correction*, and *for instruction in righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. I have already quoted one of the ornaments of your Church, who says, that 'the 'Canonical Epistles' (and he might have added the Gospels) 'are not regular treatises upon the Christian 'Religion(3),' and I shall have occasion to shew from an ancient Father, that this religion did prevail and flourish soon after the age of the Apostles, among nations which did not even know the use of letters.

IV. However light Protestants of this age may make of the ancient Fathers, as *theological authorities* (4),

(1) Ruffin. inter Opera Hieron.

(2) The title *Catholic* was afterwards added, when heresies increased.

(3) Elements of Theology, vol. ii.

(4) Jewel, Andrews, Hooker, Morton, Pearson, and other Protestant divines of the 16th and 17th centuries, laboured hard to press the Fathers into their service, but with such bad success, that the succeeding controversialists gave them up in despair. The learned Protestant, Causabon, confessed that the Fathers were all on the Catholic side; the equally learned Obrecht testifies that, in reading their works, 'he was frequently 'provoked to throw them on the ground, finding them so full of Popery;' while Middleton heaps every kind of obloquy upon them.

they cannot object to them as *faithful witnesses* of the doctrine and discipline of the Church in their respective times. It is chiefly in the latter character that I am going to bring a certain number of them forward, namely, to prove that during the five first ages of the Church, no less than in the subsequent ages, the Unwritten Word, or Tradition, was held in equal estimation by her with the Scripture itself, and that she claimed a divine right of propounding and explaining them both.

I begin with the disciple of the Apostles, St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch: it is recorded of him that, in his passage to Rome, where he was sentenced to be devoured by wild beasts, he exhorted the Christians, who got access to him, 'to guard themselves against 'the rising heresies, and to adhere with the utmost 'firmness to the *tradition of the Apostles* (1).' The same sentiments appear in this Saint's epistles, and also in those of his fellow martyr, St. Polycarp, *the angel of the Church of Smyrna* (2).

One of the disciples of the last-mentioned holy Bishop was St. Irenæus, who passing into Gaul became Bishop of Lyons. He has left twelve books against the heresies of his time, which abound with testimonies to the present purpose; some few of which I shall here insert.—He writes: 'Nothing is easier to those 'who seek for the truth than to remark in every

(1) Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 30. (2) Revel. ii. 8.

'Church *the tradition*, which the Apostles have mani-
'fested to all the world. We can name the Bishops
'appointed by the Apostles in the several Churches,
'and the successors of those Bishops down to our own
'time, none of whom ever taught, or heard of such
'doctrines as these heretics dream of (1).' This holy
Father emphatically affirms that, 'In explaining the
'Scriptures, Christians are to attend to the *Pastors of*
'*the Church*, who, by the ordinance of God, have *re-*
'*ceived the inheritance of truth*, with the succession
'of their Sees (2).'—He adds, 'The tongues of na-
'tions vary, but the virtue of *tradition is one and the*
'*same* every where: nor do the Churches in Germany
'believe or teach differently from those in Spain,
'Gaul, the East, Egypt, or Lybia (3).'—'Since it
'would be tedious to enumerate the succession of all
'the Churches, we appeal to the faith and *tradition* of
'the greatest, most ancient, and best known Church,
'that of Rome, founded by the Apostles, SS. Peter
'and Paul;—for with this Church all others agree, in
'as much as in her is preserved the tradition which
'comes down from the Apostles (4).'—SUPPOSING
'THE APOSTLES HAD NOT LEFT US THE
'SCRIPTURES, OUGHT NOT WE STILL TO
'HAVE FOLLOWED THE ORDINANCE OF

(1) Advers. Hæres. l. iii. c. 5. (2) L. iv. c. 43. (3) L. i. c. 3.
(4) L. iii. c. 2.

'TRADITION, which they consigned to those to 'whom they committed the Churches? It is this 'ordinance of *tradition* which many nations of bar-'barians, believing in Christ, follow, without the use 'of letters or ink (1).'

Tertullian, who flourished 200 years after the Christian Æra, among his other works, has left us one of the same nature, and almost the same title with that last cited. In this, speaking of the contemporary heretics, he says: 'They meddle with the Scriptures, and 'adduce arguments from them: for, in treating of 'faith, they pretend that they ought not to argue 'upon any other ground than the written documents 'of faith:—thus they weary the firm, catch the weak, 'and fill the middle sort with doubt. We begin, 'therefore, with laying it down as a maxim, that these 'men ought not to be allowed to argue at all from 'Scripture.—In fact, these disputes about the sense of 'Scripture have generally no other effect than to dis-'order either the stomach or the brain.—It is, there-'fore, the wrong method to appeal to the Scriptures, 'since these afford either no decision, or, at most, 'only a doubtful one. And even, if this were not the 'case, still, in appealing to Scripture, the natural 'order of things requires that we should first inquire 'to whom the Scriptures belong? From whom, and

(1) Advers. Hæres. l. iv. c. 64.

'by whom, and on what occasion, and to whom that 'tradition was delivered by which we became Christians? For where the truth of Christian discipline 'and faith is found, there is the truth of Scripture, 'and of the interpretation of it, and of all Christian 'traditions (1).' He elsewhere says: 'That doctrine 'is evidently true which was first delivered: on the 'contrary, that is false which is of a later date.—This 'maxim stands immoveable against the attempts of all 'late heresies.—Let such then produce the origin of 'their Churches: let them shew the succession of 'their Bishops from the Apostles, or their disciples.— 'If you live near Italy, you see before your eyes the 'Roman Church: happy Church! to which the Apostles have left the inheritance of their doctrine with 'their blood! Where Peter was crucified, like his 'Master; where Paul was beheaded, like the Baptist!— 'If this be so, it is plain, as we have said, that heretics 'are not to be allowed to appeal to Scripture, since they 'have no claim to it.—Hence it is proper to address 'them as follows:—*Who are you? Whence do you 'come? What business have you strangers with my 'property? By what right are you, Marcion, felling 'my trees? By what authority are you, Valentine, 'turning the course of my streams? Under what pretence are you, Apelles, removing my land-marks? The*

(1) Præscrip. Advers. Hæres. edit. Rhenan, pp. 36, 37.

'*estate is mine: I have the ancient, the prior possession* '*of it. I have the title deeds delivered to me by the* '*original proprietors. I am the heir of the Apostles;* '*they have made their will in my favour; while they* '*disinherited and cast you off, as strangers and ene-* '*mies* (1).' In another of his works (2) this eloquent Father proves, at great length, the absolute necessity of admitting *Tradition* no less than *Scripture* as the Rule of Faith, in as much as many important points, which he mentions, cannot be proved without it.

I pass by other shining lights of the third century, such as St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Cyprian, Origen, &c. all of whom place Apostolical Tradition on a level with Scripture, and describe the Church as the expounder of them both: I must however give the following words from the last-named great biblical scholar. He says: 'We are not to credit those, who, 'by citing real canonical Scripture, seem to say: *be-* '*hold the word is in your houses:* for we are not to 'desert our *first ecclesiastical Tradition,* nor to believe 'otherwise than as the Churches of God have, in 'their perpetual succession, delivered to us.'

Among the numerous and illustrious witnesses of the fourth age, I shall be content with citing St. Basil

(1) Præscrip. Advers. Hæres. edit. Rhenan, pp. 36, 37.
(2) De Corona Milit.

and St. Epiphanius. The former says: 'There are many 'doctrines preserved and preached in the Church, de-'rived partly from written documents, partly from 'Apostolical *Tradition*, which have equally *the same* '*force* in Religion, and which no one contradicts who 'has the least knowledge of the Christian laws (1).' The latter of these Fathers says, with equal brevity and force: 'We must make use of Tradition: for all 'things are not to be found in Scripture (2).'

St. John Chrysostom flourished at the beginning of the fifth century, who, though he strongly recommends the reading of the Holy Scriptures, yet, expounding the text, 2 *Thess.* ii. 14. says: 'Hence it is plain 'that the Apostles did not deliver to us every thing 'by their Epistles, but many things without writing. 'These are equally worthy of belief. Hence let us 'regard the Tradition of the Church, as the subject of 'our belief. Such and such a thing *is a tradition*: '*seek no farther* (3).'—It would fill a large volume to transcribe all the passages which occur in the works of the great St. Austin, in proof of the Catholic Rule, and the authority of the Church in making use of it: let therefore two or three of them speak for the rest.—'To attain to the *truth of the Scriptures*,' he says,

(1) In Lib. de Spir. Sanc. (2) De Hæres. N. 61.
(3) Παραδοσις ἐστι, μηδὲν πλέον ζήτει.

'we must follow the sense of them entertained by the 'Universal Church, to which the Scriptures themselves 'bear testimony. True it is, the Scripures themselves 'cannot deceive us, nevertheless, to prevent our being 'deceived in the question we examine by them, it is 'necessary we should advise with that Church, which 'these certainly and evidently point out to us (1).— 'This (the unlawfulness of rebaptizing heretics) is not 'evidently read either by you or by me; nevertheless, 'if there were any wise man, to whom Christ had 'borne testimony, and whom he had appointed to be 'consulted on the question, we could not fail to do 'so:—now Christ bears this testimony to his Church. '—Whoever, therefore, refuses to follow the practice 'of the Church resists Christ himself, who by his 'testimony recommends this Church (2).' Treating elsewhere on the same subject, he says: 'The Apostles, 'indeed, have prescribed nothing about this; but the 'custom must be considered as derived from their 'Tradition, since there are many things, observed by 'the Universal Church, which are justly held to have 'been appointed by the Apostles, though they are not 'written (3).'——It seems doing an injury to St. Vincent of Lerins, who lived at the end of the fifth cen-

(1) L. i. contra Crescon. (2) De Util. Credend.
(3) De Bapt. contra Donat. l. v.

tury, to quote a part of his celebrated *Commonitorium*, when the whole of it is so admirably calculated to refute the false Rule of heretics, condemned in the foregoing testimonies, and to prove the Catholic Rule, here laid down: still I can only transcribe a very small portion of it.——'It is asked,' says this Father, 'as the Scripture is perfect, what need is there of 'the authority of Church doctrine? The reason is 'because the Scripture, being so profoundly deep, is 'not understood by all persons in the same sense, but 'different persons explain it different ways, so that 'there are almost as many meanings as there are 'readers of it. Novation interprets it in one sense, 'Photinas in another, Arius, &c. in another. There-'fore it is requisite that the true road of expounding 'the Prophets and Apostles must be marked out, ac-'cording to the ecclesiastical Catholic line.

'It never was, is, or will be lawful for Catholic 'Christians to teach any doctrine, except that which 'they once received; and it ever was, is, and will be 'their duty to condemn those who do so.—Do the here-'tics then appeal to the Scriptures? Certainly they do, 'and this with the utmost confidence. You will see 'them running hastily through the different books of 'Holy Writ, those of Moses, Kings, the Psalms, the 'Gospels, &c. At home and abroad, in their discourses

'and in their writings, they hardly produce a sen-
'tence which is not larded with the words of Scripture,
'&c.; but they are so much the more to be dreaded, as
'they conceal themselves under the veil of the Divine
'laws. Let us, however, remember, that Satan trans-
'formed himself into an angel of light.——If he could
'turn the Scriptures against the Lord of Majesty,
'what use may he not make of them against us poor
'mortals!——If then Satan and his disciples, the
'heretics, are capable of thus perverting Holy Scripture,
'how are Catholics, the children of the Church, to
'make use of them, so as to discern truth from false-
'hood? They must carefully observe the rule, laid
'down at the beginning of this treatise by the holy
'and learned men I referred to: THEY ARE TO
'INTERPRET THE DIVINE TEXT ACCORD-
'ING TO THE TRADITION OF THE CATHOLIC
'CHURCH (1).'

It would be as easy to prove this Rule of Faith from the Fathers of the sixth as of the former centuries, particularly from St. Gregory the Great, that holy Pope, who at the close of this century, sent missionaries from Rome to convert our Pagan ancestors: but, I am sure, you will think that evidence enough has been brought to shew that the ancient

(1) Vincent Lerins Commonit. Advers. Hær. edit. Baluz. An English translation of this little work has lately been published.

Fathers of the Church, from the very time of the Apostles, held this *whole Rule of Faith*, namely, the Word of God *unwritten as well as written*, together with *the living, speaking tribunal of the Church* to preserve and interpret both of them.

I am, &c.

J. M.

LETTER XI.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq. &c.

THE TRUE RULE.

DEAR SIR,

THE all-importance of determining with ourselves which is the right Rule or Method of discovering Religious Truth must be admitted by all thinking Christians; as it is evident that this Rule alone can conduct them to it, and that a false Rule is capable of conducting them into all sorts of errors. It is equally clear why all those who are bent upon deserting the Catholic Church, reject her Rule, that of the *whole word of God;* together with her *living authority* in explaining it: for, while this Rule and this authority are acknowledged, there can be no heresy or schism among Christians, as whatever points of Religion are not clear from Scripture are supplied and illustrated by Tradition; and as the Pastors of the Church, who possess that authority, are always living and ready to declare what is the sense of Scripture and what the Tradition on each contested point which they have received in succession from the Apostles. The only resource, therefore, of persons resolved to follow their own or their forefathers's particular opinions or

practices, in matters of religion, with the exception of the enthusiast, has been in all times, both ancient and modern, to appeal to mere Scripture, which being a *dead letter*, leaves them at liberty to explain it as they will.

I. And yet, with all their repugnance to Tradition and Church authority, Protestants have found themselves absolutely obliged, in many instances, to admit of them both.—It has been demonstrated above that they are obliged to admit of Tradition, in order to admit of Scripture itself. Without this, they can neither know that there are any writings at all dictated by God's inspiration, nor which these writings are in particular (1), nor what versions, or publications of them are genuine. But as this matter has been sufficiently elucidated, I proceed to other points of Religion, which Protestants receive, either without the authority of Scripture, or in opposition to the letter of it.

The first precept in the Bible is that of sanctifying the seventh day: *God blessed the* SEVENTH DAY, *and sanctified it.* Gen. ii. 3. This precept was confirmed by God in the Ten Commandments: *Remember*

(1) Amongst all the learned Protestants of this age, Dr. Porteus is the only one who pretends to discern Scripture, 'partly on account of its own 'reasonableness, and the characters of divine wisdom in it.' Brief Confut. p. 9. I could have wished to ask his Lordship, whether it is by these characters that he has discovered the *Canticle or Song of Solomon* to be inspired Scripture?

the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. The SEVENTH DAY *is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.* Exod. xx. On the other hand Christ declares that he is *not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.* Mat. v. 17. He himself observed the Sabbath: *and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day:* Luke iv. 16. His disciples likewise observed it, after his death: *They rested on the Sabbath-day, according to the commandment.* Luke xxiii. 56. Yet with all this weight of Scripture-authority for keeping the *Sabbath* or *Seventh-day* holy, Protestants of all denominations make this a *prophane day*, and transfer the obligation of it to the *first day of the week*, or the *Sunday.* Now what authority have they for doing this? None at all: but the *Unwritten Word*, or *Tradition* of the Catholic Church, which declares that the Apostles made the change in honour of Christ's Resurrection and the descent of the Holy Ghost on that day of the week. Then, with respect to the manner of keeping that day holy, their universal doctrine and practice are no less at variance with the Sacred Text. The Almighty says: *From even unto even shall you celebrate your Sabbath,* Levit. xxiii. 32, which is the practice of the Jews down to the present time; but not of any Protestants that ever I heard of. Again it is declared in Scripture to be unlawful to dress victuals on that day, *Exod.* xvi. 23, or even to make a fire, *Exod.* xxxv. 3. Again, where is

there a precept in the whole Scripture more express than that against eating blood? God said to Noah: *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat to you—but flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat.* Gen. ix. 4. This prohibition we know was confirmed by Moses, *Levit.* xvii. 11, *Deut.* xii. 23, and by the Apostles, and was imposed upon the Gentiles who were converted to the Faith, *Acts* xv. 20. Nevertheless, where is the religious Protestant who scruples to eat gravy with his meat, or puddings made of blood? At the same time if he be asked: *Upon what authority* do you act in contradiction to the express words of both the Old and the New Testament? he can find no other answer than that he has learned from *The Tradition of the Church* that the prohibition was only temporary.—I will confine myself to one more instance of Protestants abandoning *their own Rule,* that of Scripture alone, to follow *ours,* of Scripture explained by Tradition. If an intelligent Pagan who had carefully perused the New Testament were asked; which of the ordinances, mentioned in it, is most explicitly and strictly enjoined? I make no doubt but he would answer that it is; *The washing of feet.* To convince yourself of this, be pleased to read the first seventeen verses of St. John, c. xiii. Observe *the motive* assigned for Christ's performing the ceremony

there recorded; namely, his 'love for his disciples:' next *the time* of his performing it; namely, when he was about to depart out of this world: then *the stress* he lays upon it, in what he said to Peter: *if I wash thee not thou hast no part with me:* finally, *his injunction*, at the conclusion of it: *If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.* I now ask, on what pretence can those who profess to make *Scripture alone* the Rule of their Religion totally disregard this institution and precept? Had this ceremony been observed in the Church when Luther and the other first Protestants began to dogmatize, there is no doubt but they would have retained it: but, having learnt from her that it was only figurative, they acquiesced in this decision, contrary to what appears to be the plain sense of Scripture.

II. But I asserted that Protestants find themselves obliged not only to adopt the Rule of our Church, on many the most important subjects, but also to *claim her authority.* It is true, as a late Dignitary of the Establishment observes (1), that, 'When Protestants 'first withdrew from the communion of the Church of 'Rome, the principles they went upon were such as 'these: Christ, by his gospel, hath called all men to '*the liberty*, the glorious liberty, *of the sons of God*,

(1) Archdeacon Blackburn in his celebrated Confessional, p. 1.

'and restored them to the privilege of working out 'their own salvation by their own understanding and 'endeavours. For this work sufficient means are 'afforded in the Scriptures, without having recourse to 'the doctrines and commandments of men. Conse-'quently faith and conscience, having no dependence 'upon man's laws, are not to be compelled by man's 'authority.'—What now was the consequence of this fundamental Rule of Protestantism?—Why, that endless variety of Doctrines, errors, and impieties, mentioned above, followed by those tumults, wars, rebellions, and anarchy, with which the history of every country is filled, which embraced the new Religion.—It is readily supposed that the Princes, and other Rulers of those countries, ecclesiastical as well as civil, however hostile they might be to the ancient Church, would wish to restrain these disorders and make their subjects adopt the same sentiments with themselves. Hence, in every Protestant State, Articles of Religion, and Confessions of Faith, differing from one another, but each one agreeing with the opinion, for the time being, of those Princes and Rulers, were enacted by law, and enforced by excommunication, deprivation, exile, imprisonment, torture, and death. These latter punishments indeed, however frequently they were exercised by Protestants against Protestants, as well as against Catholics, during the 16th and 17th centu-

ries (1), have not been resorted to during the last hundred years; but the terrible sentence of excommunication, which includes outlawry, even now hangs over the head of every Protestant Bishop, as well as other Clergyman in this country (2), who interpret those passages of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ in the sense which it appears from their writings a number of them entertain; and none of them can take possession of a living without subscribing the 39 Articles, and publicly declaring his *unfeigned assent and consent* to them and *to every thing contained in the Book of Common Prayer* (3). Thus, by adopting a false Rule of Religion, thinking Protestants are reduced to the cruel extremity of palpable contradiction! They cannot give up 'the glorious liberty,' as it is called above, of explaining the Bible each one for himself, without, at once, giving up their cause to the Catholics; and they cannot adhere to it without many of the above-mentioned fatal consequences, and without the speedy dissolution of their respective churches. Impatient of the constraint in being obliged to sign articles of faith which they do not believe, many able

(1) See the Letter on The *Reformation* and on *Persecution* in *Letters to a Prebendary*. See also Neal's History of the Puritans, Delaune's Narrative, Sewel's History of the Quakers, &c.

(2) See many excommunicating Canons, and particularly one A. D. 1640, against 'the damnable and cursed heresy of Socinianism,' as it is termed, in Bishop Sparrow's Collection.

(3) 1st Eliz. cap. 2.—14 Car. ii. c. 4. Item Canon 36 et 38.

clergymen of the establishment have written strongly against them, and have even petitioned Parliament to be relieved from the alledged *grievance* of subscribing the professed doctrine of their own Church (1). On the other hand, the Legislature foreseeing the consequences, which would result from the removal of the obligation, have always rejected their prayer: and the Judges have even refused to admit the following *Salvo* in addition to the Subscription: 'I assent and consent to the 'Articles and the Book, *as far as these are agreeable to* '*the word of God* (2).' In these straits many of the most able as well as the most respectable of the Established Clergy have been reduced to such sophistry and casuistry, as to move the pity of their very opponents. One of these, the Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (3), as one way of excusing his brethren for subscribing articles which they do not believe in, cites the example of the Divines at Geneva, where, he says, 'a complete tacit *Reformation* seems to have 'taken place. The Genevese have now, in fact, quit-'ted their Calvinistic doctrines, though, *in form*, they 'retain them.—When the Minister is admitted, he 'takes an oath of assent to the Scriptures, and pro-

(1) There was such a Petition signed by a great number of Clergymen, and supported by many others in 1772.

(2) See Confessional, p. 183.

(3) Lectures in Divinity, delivered in the University of Cambridge, by J. Hey, D.D. as Norrisian Professor, 1797, vol. ii. p. 57.

'fesses to teach them *according to the Catechism of Cal-* '*vin;* but this last clause about Calvin, *he makes a* '*separate business;* speaking lower, or altering his pos- 'ture, or speaking after a considerable interval (1).' Such a change of posture or tone of voice in the swearer, our learned Professor considers as sufficient to excuse him from the guilt of prevarication, in swearing contrary to the plain meaning of his oath! It is not, however, intimated that the Professor himself has recourse to this expedient: his particular system is, that 'the Church of England, like that of Geneva, has, of 'late, undergone a complete *tacit Reformation* (2)— 'and hence that the sense of its Articles of Faith is to 'be determined *by circumstances* (3).' Thus he adds (referring, I presume, to the Statutes of King's College Cambridge) the oath: 'I will say so many masses 'for the soul of Henry VI. may come to mean, I will 'perform the religious duties required of me (4)!!' The celebrated moralist, Dr. Paley, justifies a departure from the original sense of the Articles of Religion subscribed by an *INCONVENIENCE, which is manifest and beyond all doubt* (5)*!!* Archdeacon Powell,

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid. p. 48, (particularly in its approach to Socinianism, from which he signifies it is divided only by a few 'unmeaning words.')

(3) Ibid. p. 49. (4) P. 62.

(5) Moral and Polit. Philos. Not having this work, or Dr. Powell's Sermon at hand, I here quote from Overton's *True Churchman*, p. 337.

Master of St. John's College, defends the English Clergy from the charge of subscribing what they do not believe, because, he says, 'The crime is impossible: 'as that cannot be the sense of the Declaration which 'no one imagines to be its sense; nor can that inter-'pretation be erroneous which all have received (1)!' And yet such Prelates as Secker, Horseley, Cleaver, Pretyman, with all the Judges, strongly maintain that the literal meaning of the Articles must be strictly adhered to!

I could cite many other dignitaries or other leading Clergymen of the Establishment, and nearly the whole host of the Dissenters, who have recourse to such quibbles and evasions, in order to get rid of the plain sense of the Articles and Creeds, to which they have solemnly engaged themselves before the Creator, as, I am convinced, they would not make use of in any contract with a fellow creature: but I hasten to take in hand the admired Discourses of my friend, Dr. Balguy. He was the champion, the very Achilles, of those who defended the subscription of the 39 Articles, against the petitioners for the abrogation of it, in 1772. And how think you, Dear Sir, did he defend it? Not by vindicating the truth of the Articles themselves; much less by any of the quibbles mentioned or alluded to above; but upon the principle, that an exterior shew

(1) Serm. on Subscrip.

of uniformity in the Ministers of Religion is necessary for the support of it; and that, therefore, they ought to subscribe and teach the doctrine prescribed to them by the law, whatever they may inwardly think of it. Thus it was that he and many of his friends imagined it possible to unite religious liberty with ecclesiastical restrictions. But I will give you the Archdeacon's own words in one of his Charges to his Clergy. 'The Articles, we will say, are not exactly *what we might wish* '*them to be.* Some of them are expressed in *doubtful* '*terms;* others are *inaccurate*, perhaps, *unphilosophical:* 'others again may chance to *mislead* an ignorant reader 'into some *erroneous opinions* (1): but is there any one 'among them that leads to *immorality?* Is there one 'in the number that will make us revengeful or cruel?' &c. (2). On this principle, you might in the Eastern world conscientiously swear your assent and consent to the fables of the Koran or the Vedam!! But, to proceed, he says: 'Nothing is clearer than that the '*uniform appearance* of Religion is the cause of its ge-'neral and easy reception. Destroy this uniformity, 'and you cannot but introduce doubt and perplexity 'into the minds of the people (3).' Again, he says:

(1) Which articles they are that the Doctor particularly objects to, we can easily gather from his general language concerning Mysteries, the Sacraments, and our Redemption by Christ. On this last head he seriously cautions us against 'censuring or persecuting our brethren because their *nonsense* and 'our's wears a different dress.' Charge ii. p. 192.

(2) Charge vi. p. 293. (3) Charge v. p. 257.

'I am far from wishing to discourage the Clergy of 'the Established Church from thinking for themselves, 'or from speaking what they think, nor even from 'writing.—I say nothing against the right of private 'judgment or speech, I only contend that men ought 'not to attack the Church from those very pulpits, in 'which they were placed for her defence (1).'—What is this doctrine of the subscription-champion, Dear Sir, I appeal to you, but a defence of the most vile and sacrilegious hypocrisy that can possibly be imagined? He leaves the Clergy at liberty to *disbelieve in*, to *talk* and even to *write against the doctrine of their Church;* but requires them *in the pulpit to defend it!* I agree with him that contradictory doctrines publicly maintained by Ministers of the same Religion, is the way to make the adherents of it renounce it entirely: but will not that effect more certainly follow from the people's discovering, as they must in the case supposed discover, that their Clergy *do not themselves believe in the doctrines which they preach!*

But this system of deceiving the people is not peculiar to Dr. Balguy: it is avowed by his friend and master, Bishop Hoadley, and represented by Archdeacon Blackburn, from whom I take the following

(1) Disc. vii. p. 120. Discourses by Thomas Balguy, D.D. Archdeacon and Prebendary of Winchester, &c. dedicated to the King. Lockyer Davies, 1785.

passage, as being very generally adopted (1).—'In all 'proposals and schemes to be reduced to practice,' the Bishop says, 'we must suppose the world to be *what it* '*is, and not what it ought to be.* We must propose, 'not merely what is absolutely good in itself, but what 'is so with respect to the prejudices, tempers, and con-'stitutions, we know and are sure to be among us.—It 'is represented that the world was never less disposed 'to be serious and reasonable than at this period. Re-'ligious reflection, we are informed, is not the *humour* 'of the times. We are therefore advised to keep our 'prudence and our patience a little longer; to wait till 'our people are in a better temper, and, in the mean 'time, to bear with their manners and dispositions; '*gently and gradually correcting their foolish notions* '*and habits; but still taking care not to throw in more* '*light upon them, at once, than the weak optics of men,* '*so long used to sit in darkness are able to bear.*'—His Lordship's words are guarded, but perfectly intelligible. Bishop Hoadley had undermined the Church, he professed to support, in her doctrine and discipline, as has been elsewhere demonstrated (2), and he wished all the Clergy to co-operate in diffusing his Socinian system; but he advised them to attempt this *gently and gradually*, bearing with the people's *foolish*

(1) Confessional, p. 375, p. 385.

(2) Letters to a Prebendary, Art. Hoadlyism.

notions, and not *throwing too much light upon them at once:* in other words, continuing to subscribe the articles and to preach them from the pulpit, being inwardly persuaded at the same time, that they are not only false, but also *foolish!*—Thus, Dear Sir, you have seen the necessity to which the different Protestant Societies have found themselves reduced, of occasionally appealing to tradition, and of assuming authority to dictate Confessions and Articles of Religion, in direct violation of their boasted charter of private judgment: and you have seen that this inconsistency has rendered *the remedy worse than the disease.* These weapons, not being natural to them, have been turned against them, and have mortally wounded them: and 'the 'Church of England in particular,' as one of its principal defenders complains, 'is like an oak, cleft to 'shivers with wedges made out of its own body (1).' You will now see with what ease and success the Catholic Church wields these weapons; but, first, I think it best to add something by way of confirming and elucidating this Catholic Rule.

III. What has been said above in proof of the Catholic Rule, namely, that Christ established it when he sent his Apostles to preach the Gospel, and that the Apostles followed it, when they established Churches throughout different nations, is so incontestable as not

(1) Daubeny's Guide to the Church. Append.

to be denied by any of our learned opponents: still less will they deny, that the ancient Fathers and the Doctors of the Church, in every age, maintained this Rule. Accordingly, one of the latest and most learned Protestant controvertists writes thus: 'No one 'will deny that Jesus Christ laid the foundation of 'his Church *by preaching:* nor can we deny that *the* '*unwritten word was the first Rule of Christianity* (1).' This being granted, it was incumbent on his Lordship to demonstrate, and this by no less an authority than that which established the Rule, at what precise period it was abrogated. Was it when this Gospel or that Gospel, when this Epistle or that Epistle was written, though known only to particular congregations or persons, that the Pastors of the Church lost their authority of proclaiming: *So we have received from the Apostles, or the disciples of the Apostles: so all the other Pastors of the Catholic Church believe and teach.* Or was this abrogation of the *First Rule of Christianity,* deferred till the Canon of Scripture was fixed at the end of the fourth century? So far from there being Divine authority, there is not even a hint in Ecclesiastical History on which to ground this pretended alteration in the Rule of Faith. His Lordship's only foundation is his *own conjecture*: 'It is extremely *im-* '*probable,*' he says, '*that an all-wise Providence,* in im-

(1) Comparative View of the Churches, p. 61, by Dr. (now Bishop) Marsh.

'parting a new revelation to mankind, would suffer any 'doctrine or Article of Faith to be transmitted to pos-'terity by so precarious a vehicle as that of Oral Tra-'dition (1).' The Bishop of London (2) had before said nearly the same thing, as well with respect to Tradition being the *original Rule*, as to the *improbability* of its continuing to be so, 'considering,' as he says, 'how 'liable the easiest story, transmitted by word of mouth, 'is to be essentially altered in the course of one or two 'hundred years.'—But, to the *opinions* of these learned Prelates, I oppose, in the first place, undeniable *facts*. It is, then, certain, that the whole doctrine and practice of Religion, including the rites of sacrifice, and, indeed, the whole Sacred History, was preserved by the Patriarchs, in succession, from Adam down to Moses, during the space of 2400 years, by means of Tradition: and, when the law was written, many most important truths, regarding a future life, the emblem and prophecies concerning the Messiah, and the inspiration and authenticity of the sacred books themselves, were preserved in the same way.—Secondly, it is unwarrantable in these Prelates to compare the essential Traditions of Religion, with ordinary stories: in the truth of these no one has an interest, and no means have been provided to preserve it from corruption; whereas, *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*,

(1) P. 67. (2) Dr. Porteus, Brief Confut.

the Church has ever guarded as *the apple of her eye*, and all Ecclesiastical History witnesses the extreme care and pains which were taken in ancient times by the Pastors to instruct the faithful in the tenets and practices of their Religion, previously to their being baptized (1): the same are generally taken by their successors previously to the Confirmation and first Communion of their neophytes at the present day.—Thirdly, when any fresh controversy arises in the Church the fundamental maxim of the Bishops and Popes, to whom it belongs to decide upon it, is, not to consult their own private opinion or interpretation of Scripture, but to inquire *what is and ever has been the doctrine of the Church*, concerning it. Hence, their cry is and ever has been, on such occasions, as well in council as out of it: *So we have received: so the Universal Church believes: let there be no new doctrine: none but what has been delivered down to us by Tradition* (2).—Fourthly, the Tradition of which we now treat, is *not a local* but a *universal* Tradition, as widely spread as the Catholic Church itself is, and being found every where the same. The maxim of the sententious Tertullian must be admitted: 'Error,' he says, 'of course, varies, but that doctrine 'which is one and the same among many, is not an

(1) See Fleury's Mœurs des Chret. Hartley in B. Watson's Col. vol. v. page 91.

(2) 'Nil innovetur: nil nisi quod traditum est.' Steph. Papa I.

'error but a Tradition (1).' However liable men, and particularly illiterate men are to believe in fables; yet if, on the discovery of America, the inhabitants of it, from Hudson's Bay to Cape Horn, had been found to agree in the same account of their origin and general history, we should certainly give credit to them.—But, fifthly, in the present case, they are not the Catholics of different ages and nations alone who vouch for the Traditions in question, I mean those rejected by Protestants, but all the subsisting heretics and schismatics of former ages without exception. The Nestorians and Eutychians, for example, deserted the Catholic Church, in defence of opposite errors, near 1400 years ago, and still form regular Churches under Bishops and Patriarchs throughout the East: in like manner the Greek schismatics, properly so called, broke off from the Latin Church, for the last time, in the eleventh century. Theirs is well-known to be the prevailing Religion of Christians throughout the Turkish and Russian Empires. Nevertheless, these and all the other Christian sectaries of ancient date, agree upon every article in dispute between Catholics and Protestants (except that of the Pope's Supremacy) with the former and condemn the latter (2). Let Dr. Porteus and the

(1) 'Variasse deberet error, sed quod unum apud multos invenitur, non 'est erratum, sed traditum.' Præscrip. advers. Hæret.

(2) See the proofs of this in the *Perpetuité de la Foi*, copied from the original documents in the French King's Library.

other controvertists, who declaim against the alledged ignorance and vices of the Catholic clergy and laity during the five or six ages preceding the Reformation, and pretend to shew how the tenets which they object to might have been introduced into our Church, explain how precisely the same could have been quietly received by the Nestorians at Bagdad, the Eutychians at Alexandria, and the Greeks at Moscow! All these, and particularly the last named, were ever ready to find fault with us upon subjects of comparatively small consequence, such as the use of unleavened bread in the Sacrament, the days and manner of our fasting, and even the mode of shaving our beards; and yet, so far from objecting to the pretended novelties of prayers for the Dead, addresses to the Saints, the Mass, the Real Presence, &c. they have always professed, and continue to profess, these doctrines and practices as zealously as we do.

Finally, by way of farther answer to his Lordship's shameful calumny, that the ancient 'clergy and laity 'were so universally and monstrously ignorant and 'vicious, that nothing was too bad for them to do or 'too absurd for them to believe,' thereby insinuating that the former invented and the latter were duped into the belief of the articles on which the Catholic Church and the Church of England are divided; as also by way of farther confirming the certainty of Tra-

dition, I maintain that it would have been much easier for the ancient clergy to corrupt the Scriptures than the religious belief of the people. For, it is well known that the Scriptures were chiefly in the hands of the clergy, and that, before the use of printing, in the fifteenth century, the copies of it were renewed and multiplied in the Monasteries by the labour of the Monks, who, if they had been so wicked, might with some prospect of success, have attempted to alter the New Testament, in particular, as they pleased: whereas, the doctrines and practices of the Church were in the hands of the people of all civilized nations, and, therefore, could not be altered without their knowledge and consent. Hence, wherever religious novelties were introduced, a violent opposition to them, and, of course, tumults and schisms would have ensued. If they had been generally received in one country, as for example, in France, this would have been the occasion, of their being rejected with redoubled antipathy in a neighbouring hostile nation, as, for instance, England. Yet none of these disturbances or schisms do we read of, respecting any of the doctrines or practices of our Religion, objected to by Protestants, either in the same kingdom, or among the different states of Christianity. I said that the doctrines and practices of Religion were in the hands of all 'the people,' in fact they were all, in every part of the Church, obliged to

receive the Holy Sacrament at Easter; now they could not do this without knowing whether they had been previously taught to consider this as *bread and wine taken in memory of Christ*, or as the *Real Body and Blood of Christ* himself. If they had originally held the former opinion, could they have been persuaded or dragooned into the latter, without violent opposition on their part, and violent persecution on that of their clergy? Again, they could not assist at the religious services performed at the funerals of their relations, or on the festivals of the Saints, without recollecting whether they had previously been instructed *to pray for* the former *and to invoke the prayers* of the latter. If they had not been so instructed, would they, one and all, at the same time, and in every country, have quietly yielded to the first impostors who preached up such supposed superstitions to them; as, in this case, we are sure they must have done? In a word, there is but one way of accounting for the alledged alterations in the doctrine of the Church, that mentioned by the learned Dr. Bailey (1); which is to suppose that, on some one night, all the Christians of the world went to sleep sound Protestants and awoke the next morning rank Papists!

(1) He was son of the Bishop of Bangor, and becoming a convert to the Catholic Church, wrote several works in her defence; and among the rest, one under the title of these letters, and another called A Challenge.

IV. I now come to consider the benefits derived from the Catholic Rule or Method of Religion. The first part of this Rule conducts us to the second part; that is to say, Tradition conducts us to Scripture. We have seen that Protestants, by their own confession, are obliged to build the latter upon the former; in doing which they act most inconsistently: whereas Catholics, in doing the same thing, act with perfect consistency. Again, Protestants in building Scripture, as they do, upon Tradition, as a mere human testimony, not as a *Rule of Faith*, can only form an act of *human faith*, that is to say, *an opinion* of its being inspired (1); whereas Catholics, believing in the Tradition of the Church, as a *Divine Rule*, are enabled to believe, and do believe in the Scriptures with a *firm faith*, as the certain word of God. Hence the Catholic Church requires her Pastors, who are to preach and expound the word of God, to study this second part of her Rule no less than the first part, with unremitting diligence, and she encourages those of her flock, who are properly qualified and disposed, to read it for their edification.

In perusing the books of the Old Testament, some of the most striking passages are those which regard

(1) Chillingworth, in his Religion of Protestants, chap. ii. expressly teaches, that 'The books of Scripture are not the objects of our faith,' and that 'a man may be saved, who should not believe them to be the word 'of God.'

the prerogatives of the future kingdom of the Messiah, namely, the extent, the visibility, and indefectibility of the Church: in examining the New Testament, we find in several of its clearest passages, the strongest proofs of its being an *infallible Guide* in the way of salvation. The texts alluded to have been already cited. Hence we look upon the Church with increased veneration, and listen to her decisions with redoubled confidence.—But here I think it necessary to refute an objection which, I believe, was first started by Dr. Stillingfleet, and has since been adopted by many other controvertists. They say to us: *you argue, in what logicians call, a vicious circle: for you prove Scripture by your Church, and then your Church by Scripture. This is like John giving a character to Thomas, and Thomas a character to John.*——True it is, that I prove the *inspiration* of Scripture by the Tradition of the Church, and that I prove the *infallibility* of the Church by the testimony of Scripture; but you must take notice, that independently of, and prior to, the testimony of Scripture, I knew from Tradition, and the general arguments of the credibility of Christianity, that the Church is an illustrious Society, instituted by Christ, and that its Pastors have been appointed by him to guide me in the way of salvation. In a word, it is not every kind of mutual testimony which runs in a *vicious circle*: for the

Baptist bore testimony to Christ, and Christ bore testimony to the Baptist.

V. The advantage, and even necessity, of having a living, speaking authority for preserving peace and order in every Society is too obvious to be called in question. The Catholic Church has such an authority; the different societies of Protestants, though they claim it, cannot effectually exercise it, as we have shewn, on account of their opposite fundamental principle of private judgment. Hence when debates arise among Catholics concerning points of faith (for as to scholastic and other questions, each one is left to defend his own opinion), the Pastors of the Church, like Judges in regard of civil contentions, fail not to examine them by the received Rule of Faith, and to pronounce an authoritative sentence upon them. The dispute is thus quashed, and peace is restored: for *if any party will not hear the Church, he is*, of course, regarded as *a heathen and a publican.* On the other hand, dissensions in any Protestant society, which adheres to its fundamental Rule of Religious liberty, must be irremediable and endless.

VI. The same method which God has appointed to keep peace in his Church, he has also appointed to preserve it in the breasts of her several children. Hence while other Christians, who have no Rule of Faith but their own fluctuating opinions, *are carried about by*

every wind of doctrine, and are agitated by dreadful doubts and fears, as to the safety of the road they are in; Catholics, being moored to the rock of Christ's Church, never experience any apprehension whatsoever on this head. The truth of this may be ascertained by questioning pious Catholics, and particularly those who have been seriously converted from any species of Protestantism: such persons are generally found to speak in raptures of the peace and security they enjoy in the communion of the Catholic Church, compared with their doubts and fears before they embraced it. Still the death-bed is evidently the best situation for making this inquiry. I have mentioned, in my former letter, that great numbers of Protestants, at the approach of death, seek to be reconciled to the Catholic Church, many instances of this are notorious, though many more, for obvious reasons, are concealed from public notice: on the other hand, a challenge has frequenly been made by Catholics (among the rest by Sir Toby Mathews, Dean Cressy, F. Walsingham, Molines dit Flechiere, and Ulric Duke of Brunswick, all of them converts) to the whole world, to name a single Catholic, who, at the hour of death, expressed a wish to die in any other communion than his own!

I have now, Dear Sir, fully proved what I undertook to prove, that the Rule of Faith professed by rational Protestants, that of *Scripture as interpreted by*

each person's private judgment, is no less fallacious than the Rule of Fanatics, who imagine themselves to be directed by an *individual, private inspiration.* I have shewn that this rule is evidently *unserviceable to infinitely the greater part of mankind;* that it is *liable to lead* men into error, and that it *has actually led vast numbers of them into endless errors and shocking impieties.* The proof of these points was sufficient, according to the principles I laid down at the beginning of our controversy, to disprove the Rule itself: but I have, moreover, demonstrated that our Divine Master, Christ, did not establish this rule, nor his Apostles follow it: that the Protestant Churches, and that of England, in particular, were not founded according to this rule: and that individual Protestants have not been guided by it in the choice of their Religion: finally, that the adoption of it leads to uncertainty and uneasiness of mind in life, and more particularly at the hour of death.——On the other hand, I have shewn that the Catholic Rule, that of the entire Word of God, unwritten as well as written, together with the authority of the living Pastors of the Church in explaining it, was appointed by Christ:—was followed by the Apostles:—was maintained by the Holy Fathers:—has been resorted to from necessity, in both particulars, by the Protestant congregations, though with the

worst success, from the impossibility of uniting private judgment with it:—that Tradition lays a firm ground for Divine Faith in Scripture: that these two united together as one Rule, and each bearing testimony to the living-speaking authority of the Church in expounding that Rule, the latter is preserved in peace and union through all ages and nations (1):—and, in short, that Catholics, by adhering to this rule and authority, live and die in peace and security, as far as regards the truth of their religion.

It remains for you, Dear Sir, and your religious friends, who have called me into this field of controversy, to determine which of the two methods you will follow, in settling your religious concerns for time and FOR ETERNITY! Were it possible for me to err in following the Catholic method, with such a mass of evidence in its favour, methinks I could answer at the judgment-seat of Eternal Truth, with a pious writer of the middle ages: 'Lord, if I have been 'deceived, thou art the author of my error (2).' Whereas should you be found to have mistaken the right way, by depending upon your own private opinion, contrary to the directions of your authorized guides, what would you be able to alledge in excuse

(1) 'Domicillium pacis et unitatis.'—S. Cyp. Ep. 46.
(2) Hugh of St. Victor.

for such presumption?——Think of this while you have time, and pray humbly and earnestly for God's holy grace to enlighten and strengthen you.

I am,

Dear Sir, &c.

J. M.

LETTER XII.

To JAMES BROWN, Esq. &c.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

DEAR SIR,

I AM not forgetful of the promise I made in my last letter but one, to answer the contents of those which I had then received from yourself, Mr. Topham, and Mr. Askew. Within these few days I have received other letters from yourself and Mr. Topham, which, equally with the former, call for my attention to their substance. However, as it would take up a great deal of time to write separate answers to each of these letters, and, as I know, that they are arguments, and not formalities, which you expect from me, I shall make this letter a general reply to the several objections contained in them all, with the exception of such as have been answered in my last to you. Conceiving, also, that it will contribute to the brevity and perspicuity of my letter, if I arrange the several objections, from whomsoever they came, under their proper heads; and if, on this occasion, I make use of the scholastic instead of the epistolary style. I

shall adopt both these methods.——I must, however, remark, before I enter upon my task, that most of the objections appear to have been borrowed from the Bishop of London's book, called a *Brief Confutation of the Errors of Popery.* This was extracted from Archbishop Secker's Sermons on the same subject; which, themselves, were culled out of his predecessor Tillotson's pulpit controversy. Hence you may justly consider your arguments as the strongest which can be brought against the Catholic Rule and Religion. Under this persuasion the work in question has been selected for gratuitous distribution by your Tract Societies, wherever they particularly wish to restrain or suppress Catholicity.

Against the Catholic Rule it is objected that Christ referred the Jews to the Scriptures: *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.* John v. 35. Again, the Jews of Berea are commended by the sacred penman, *in that they search the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.* Acts xvii. 11.

Before I enter on the discussion of any part of Scripture, with you or your friends, I am bound, Dear Sir, in conformity with my Rule of Faith, as explained by the Fathers, and particularly by Tertullian, to protest against your and their right to argue from Scripture, and, of course, to deny any need there is of my re-

plying to any objection which you may draw from it. For I have reminded you that: *No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation;* and I have proved to you that the whole business of the Scriptures belongs to the Church: she has preserved them, she vouches for them, and, she alone, by confronting them, and by the help of Tradition, authoritatively explains them. Hence it is impossible that the real sense of Scripture should ever be against her and her doctrine; and hence, of course, I might quash every objection which you can draw from any passage in it by this short reply: *The Church understands the passage differently from you; therefore you mistake its meaning.* Nevertheless, as *Charity beareth all things and never faileth,* I will, for the better satisfying of you and your friends, quit my vantage ground for the present, and answer distinctly to every text not yet answered by me, which any of you, Gentlemen, or which Dr. Porteus himself, has brought against the Catholic method of Religion.

By way of answering your first objection, let me ask you, whether Christ, by telling the Jews to *search the Scriptures,* intimated that they were not to believe in his *unwritten word,* which he was then preaching, nor to hear, *his Apostles and their successors,* with whom he promised to *remain for ever?* I ask, secondly, on what *particular* question Christ referred to the

Scripture, namely, the Old Scripture? (for no part of the New was then written) was it on any question that has been or might be agitated among *Christians.* No, certainly: the sole question between him and the *infidel Jews,* was, whether he was or was not the Messiah: in proof that he was the Messiah, he adduced the ordinary motives of credibility, as they have been detailed by your late worthy Rector, Mr. Carey, the miracles he wrought, and the prophecies in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in him, as likewise the testimony of St. John the Baptist. The same is to be said of the commendations bestowed by St. Luke on the Bereans; they searched the ancient prophecies to verify that the Messiah was to be born at such a time and in such a place, and that his life and his death were to be marked by such and such circumstances. We still refer Jews and other infidels to the same proofs of Christianity, without saying any thing yet to them about our Rule or Judge of controversies.

Dr. Porteus objects what St. Luke says at the beginning of his Gospel: *It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, Most Excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.* Again St. John says, c. xx.: *These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;*

and that believing, ye might have life through his name.

Answer. It is difficult to conceive how his Lordship can draw an argument from these texts against the Catholic Rule. Surely he does not gather from the words of St. Luke, that Theophilus *did not believe* the articles in which he *had been instructed by word of mouth* till he read this Gospel! or that the Evangelist gainsaid the authority given by Christ to his disciples: *He that heareth you heareth me*, which he himself records, *Luke* x. 16. In like manner the Prelate cannot suppose that this testimony of St. John sets aside other testimonies of Christ's Divinity, or that our belief in this single article without other conditions, will insure eternal life.

Having quoted these texts, which to me appear so inconclusive; the Bishop adds, by way of proving that *Scripture* is sufficiently intelligible: 'Surely the 'Apostles were not worse writers, with divine assistance, 'than others commonly are without it (1).'

I will not here repeat the arguments and testimonies already brought (2) to shew the great obscurity of a considerable portion of the Bible, particularly with respect to the bulk of mankind, because it is sufficient to refer to the clear words of St. Peter, declaring that there are in the Epistles of St. Paul, *Some*

(1) P. 4. (2) Letter ix.

things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do all the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction, (2 Peter iii. 16), and to the instances, which occur in the Gospels, of the very Apostles frequently misunderstanding the meaning of their Divine Master.

The learned Prelate says elsewhere (1): 'The New 'Testament supposes them (the generality of people) 'capable of judging for themselves, and accordingly, 'requires them not only, to *try the Spirits whether they* '*be of God,* (1 John iv. 1.); but to *prove all things, and* '*hold fast that which is good.*' 1 Thess. v. 21.

Answer. True: St. John tells the Christians, to whom he writes, to *try the spirits whether they are of God: because,* he adds, many *false prophets are gone out into the world:* but then he gives them *two rules* for making trial: *Hereby ye know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* (which was denied by the Heretics of that time, the disciples of Simon and Cerinthus) *is not of God.* In this the Apostle tells the Christians to see whether the doctrine of these spirits was, or was not *conformable to that which they had learnt from the Church.* The second rule was: *He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is*

(1) P. 19.

not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error: namely, he bid them observe, whether these teachers did or did not listen to the divinely-constituted Pastors of the Church. Dr. P. is evidently here quoting Scripture *for* our rule, not *against* it.—The same is to be said of the other text. Prophecy was exceedingly common at the beginning of the Church, but as we have just seen, there were false prophets as well as true prophets: hence, while the Apostle defends this supernatural gift in general: *Despise not prophesyings,* he admonishes the Thessalonians to *prove them;* not certainly by their private opinions, which would be the source of endless discord; but by the established rules of the Church, and particularly by that which he tells them *to hold fast,* (2 Thess. ii. 15.) namely, Tradition.

Dr. P. in another place (1), urges the exhortation of St. Paul to Timothy: *Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them: and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, &c.* 2 Tim. iii.

Answer. Does, then, the Prelate mean to say,

(1) P. 69.

that *the form of sound words* which Timothy *had heard* from St. Paul, and which he was commanded *to hold fast*, 2 Tim. i. 13., was all contained in the Old Testament, the only Scripture which he could have read in his childhood? Or that, in this he could have learned the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation, or the ordinances of Baptism, and the Eucharist? The first part of the question is a general commendation of Tradition, the latter of Scripture.

Against Tradition, Dr. P. and yourself quotes (1) *Mark* vii., where the Pharisees and Scribes asked Christ: *Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? He answered and said to them:—in vain do they worship me, teaching FOR* (2) *doctrines the commandments of men. For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups, &c.*

Answer. Among the traditions which prevailed at the time of our Saviour, some were *divine*, such as the inspiration of the Books of Moses and the other prophets, the resurrection of the body, and the last judgment, which assuredly Christ did not condemn but

(1) P. 11.

(2) This particle FOR, which in some degree effects the sense, is a corrupt interpolation, as appears from the original Greek. N.B. The texts which Dr. P. refers to I quote from the common Bible, his citations of it are frequently inaccurate.

confirm. There were others merely *human*, and of a recent date, introduced, as St. Jerom informs us, by Sammai, Killel, Achiba, and other Pharisees, from which the Talmud is chiefly gathered. These, of course, were never obligatory. In like manner there are among Catholics *Divine Traditions*, such as the inspiration of the Gospels, the observation of the Lord's Day, the lawfulness of invoking the prayers of the Saints, and other things not clearly contained in Scripture; and there are among many Catholics, historical and even fabulous traditions (1). Now it is to the former, as avowed to be Divine by the Church, that we appeal: of the others every one may judge as he thinks best.

You both, likewise, quote *Coloss.* ii. 8. *Beware lest any man spoil* (cheat) *you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Answer. The Apostle himself informs the Colossians what kind of traditions he here speaks of, where he says: *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of any holiday, or of the new-moon, or of the Sabbath-days.* The ancient Fathers and ecclesiastical historians inform us that, in the age of the Apostles, many Jews and Pagan Philosophers professed

(1) Such are the Acts of several Saints condemned by Pope Gelasius; such also was the opinion of Christ's reign upon earth for a thousand years.

Christianity, but endeavoured to ally with it their respective superstitions, and vain speculations, absolutely inconsistent with the doctrine of the Gospel. It was against these St. Paul wrote, not against those traditions which he commanded his converts to *hold fast to, whether they had been taught by word or by epistle*, 2 Thess. ii. 15. ; nor those Traditions which he commended his other converts *for keeping*, 1 Cor. xi. 2. (1). Finally, the Apostle in that passage did not abrogate this his awful sentence: *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us.* 2 Thess. iii. 6.

Against the infallibility of the Church in deciding questions of faith, I am referred to various other arguments made use of by Dr. Porteus; and, in the first place, to the following:—'Romanists themselves own 'that men must use their eyes to find this guide; why 'then must they put them out to follow him (2)?'—I answer by the following comparisons. Every prudent man makes use of his reason to find out an able physician to take care of his health, and an able lawyer to secure his property; but having found these to his full

(1) The English Testament puts the word *Ordinances* here for *Traditions*, contrary to the sense of the original Greek, and even to the authority of Beza.

(2) P. 19.

satisfaction, does he dispute with the former about the quality of medicines, or with the latter about forms of law? Thus the Catholic makes use of his reason to observe which, among the rival communions, is the Church that Christ established and promised to remain with: having ascertained that by the plain acknowledged marks which this Church bears, he trusts his soul to her unerring judgment, in preference to his own fluctuating opinion.

Dr. Porteus adds: 'Ninety-nine parts in every 'hundred of their (the Catholic) communion, have no 'other Rule to follow but what a few priests and pri-'vate writers tell them (1).' According to this mode of reasoning, a loyal subject does not make any act of the Legislature the rule of his civil conduct, because, perhaps, he learns it only from a printed paper, or the proclamation of the bell-man. Most likely the Catholic peasant learns the doctrine of the Church from his Parish-priest; but then he knows that the doctrine of this Priest must be conformable to that of his Bishop, and that otherwise he will soon be called to an account for it: he knows also that the doctrine of the Bishop himself must be conformable to that of the other Bishops and the Pope, and that it is a fundamental maxim with them all, never to admit of any tenet but such as is believed by all the Bishops, and was believed by their predecessors up to the Apostles themselves.

(1) P. 19.

The Prelate gives a 'Rule for the unlearned and 'ignorant in Religion (that is to say of ninety-nine in 'every hundred of them), which is this: Let each man 'improve his own judgment and encrease his own 'knowledge as much as he can: and be fully assured 'that God will expect no more.'—What? If *Christ has given some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting the Saints, for the work of the ministry*, Ephes. iv. 11, does he not expect that Christians should hearken to them, and obey them? The Prelate goes on: 'In matters, *for which he 'must rely on authority,*' (mere Scripture then and private judgment, according to the Bishop himself, are not always a sufficient rule even for Protestants, but they must in some matters rely on Church authority) 'let him rely on the authority of that Church 'which God's Providence has placed him under,' (that is to say, whether Catholic, Protestant, Socinian, Antinomian, Jewish, &c.) 'rather than another which he hath nothing to do with,' (every Christian has, or ought to have, something to do with Christ's true Church) and 'trust to those, who, by encouraging free inquiry, 'appear to love truth; rather than such as, by requiring 'all their doctrines to be implicitly obeyed, seem con-'scious that they will not bear to be fairly tried.'—— What, My Lord, would you have me trust those men

who have just now deceived me by assuring me that I should not stand in need of guides at all, rather than those who told me, from the first, of the perplexities in which I find myself entangled! Again, do you advise me to prefer these conductors, who are forced to confess that they may mislead me, to those others who assure me, and this upon such strong grounds, that they will conduct me with perfect safety!

Our Episcopal controvertist finishes his admonition 'To the ignorant and unlearned' with an address calculated for the stupid and bigotted. He says: 'Let 'others build on Fathers and Popes, on traditions and 'councils, what they will: let us continue firm, as we are, 'on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus 'Christ himself being the chief corner stone.' *Ephes.* ii. What empty declamation! Do then the Fathers, Popes, and Councils profess or attempt to build religion on any other foundation than the Revelation made by God to the Apostles and Prophets? His Lordship knows full well that they do not, and that the only questions at issue are these three: 1st, Whether this Revelation has not been made and conveyed by the unwritten as well as by the written word of God? 2dly, Whether Christ did not commit this word to his Apostles and their successors, till the end of the world, for them to preserve and announce it? Lastly, whether, independently of this commission, it is consistent with

common sense, for each Protestant ploughman and mechanic to persuade himself that he, individually, (for he cannot, according to his rule, build on the opinion of other Protestants, though he could find any whose faith exactly tallied with his own) that he, I say, individually, understands the Scriptures better than all the Doctors and Bishops of the Church, who now are, or ever have been since the time of the Apostles (1)!

One of your Salopian friends, in writing to me, ridicules the idea of infallibility being lodged in any mortal man, or number of men. Hence it is fair to conclude that he does not look upon himself to be infallible: now nothing short of a man's conviction of his own infallibility, one might think, would put him on preferring his own judgment, in matters of religion, to that of the Church of all ages and all nations. Secondly, if this objection were valid, it would prove that the Apostles themselves were not infallible. Finally, I could wish your friend to form a right idea of this matter. The infallibility, then, of our Church is not a power of telling all things past, present and to come, such as the Pagans ascribed to their oracles; but merely the aid of God's Holy Spirit, to enable her truly to de-

(1) The Great Bossuet obliged the Minister, Claude, in his conference with him, openly to avow this principle; which, in fact, every consistent Protestant must avow, who maintains his private interpretation of the Bible to be the only rule of his faith.

cide what her faith is and ever has been in such articles as have been made known to her by Scripture and Tradition. This definition furnishes answers to diverse other objections and questions of Dr. P.——The Church does not decide the controversy concerning the conception of the Blessed Virgin, and several other disputed points, because she sees nothing absolutely clear and certain concerning them, either in the written or the unwritten word; and therefore leaves her children to form their own opinions concerning them. She does not dictate an exposition of the whole Bible, because she has no tradition concerning a very great proportion of it, as for example, concerning the *prophecy of Enoch*, quoted by *Jude* 14, and the *Baptism for the dead*, of which St. Paul makes mention, 1 *Cor.* xv. 29, and the chronologies and genealogies in Genesis.—The Prelate urges that the words of St. Paul, where he declares that; *The Church of God is the pillar and ground of truth*, 1 Tim. iii. 15, may be translated a different way from that received.—True: they may, but not without altering the original Greek, as also the common Protestant version.—He says: it was ordained in the Old Law that every controversy should be decided by the Priests and Levites, *Deut.* xvii. 8, and yet that these avowedly erred in rejecting Christ.—True: but the Law had then run its destined course, and the divine assistance failed the Priests in the very act of

their rejecting the promised Messiah who was then before them.—He adds, that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Church of Rome, bids her *not be high minded, but fear: for* (he adds) *if God spared not the Jews, take heed lest he also spare not thee*, Rom. xi.—Supposing the quotation to be accurate, and that the threat is particularly addressed to the Christians of Rome; what is that to the present purpose? We never supposed the promises of Christ to belong to them or their successors more than to the inhabitants of any other city. Indeed it is the opinion of some of our most learned commentators, that before the end of the world, Rome will relapse into its former Paganism (1). In a word, the promises of our Saviour, that *Hell's gates shall not prevail against his Church*—that his *Holy Spirit shall lead it into all truth*—and that he himself *will remain with it for ever*, were made to the Church of all nations and all times, in communion with St. Peter and his successors, the Bishops of Rome: and as these promises have been fulfilled, during a succession of eighteen centuries, contrary to the usual and natural course of events, and by the visible protection of the Almighty, so we rest assured that he will continue to fulfil them, 'till the Church Militant shall be wholly transformed into the Church Triumphant in the heavenly kingdom.

(1) See Cornel. a Lapid. in Apocalyp.

Finally, his Lordship, with other controvertists, objects against the infallibility of the Catholic Church, that its advocates are not agreed where to lodge this prerogative; some ascribing it to the Pope, others to a General Council, or to the Bishops dispersed throughout the Church.—True, schoolmen discuss some such points: but let me ask his Lordship, whether he finds any Catholic who denies or doubts that a General Council, with the Pope at its head, or that the Pope himself, issuing a doctrinal decision, which is received by the great body of Catholic Bishops, is secure from error? Most certainly not: and hence he may gather where all Catholics agree in lodging infallibility. In like manner, with respect to our national constitution; some lawyers hold that a Royal proclamation, in such and such circumstances, has the force of a law, others that a vote of the House of Lords, or of the Commons, or of both Houses together, has the same strength; but all subjects acknowledge that an Act of the King, Lords and Commons, is binding upon them; and this suffices for all practical purposes.

But when, Dear Sir, will there be an end of the objections and cavils of men, whose pride, ambition, or interest leads them to deny the plainest truths! You have seen those which the ingenuity and learning of the Porteus's, Seckers, and Tillotsons have raised

against the unchangeable Catholic Rule and interpreter of Faith: say, is there any thing sufficiently clear and certain in them to oppose to the luminous and sure principles, on which the Catholic method is placed? Do they afford you a sure footing, to support you against all doubts and fears on the score of your Religion, especially under the apprehension of approaching dissolution? If you answer affirmatively; I have nothing more to say: but if you cannot so answer; and, if you justly dread undertaking your voyage to eternity on the presumption of your private judgment, a presumption which you have clearly seen has led so many other rash Christians to certain shipwreck, follow the example of those who have happily arrived at the port which you are in quest of: in other words, listen to the advice of the Holy Patriarch to his son: *Then Tobias answered his Father—I know not the way, &c.:—then his Father said—Seek thee a faithful guide.* Tob. v. You will no sooner have sacrificed your own wavering judgment, and have submitted to follow the guide, whom your Heavenly Father has provided for you, than you will feel a deep conviction that you are in the right and secure way; and very soon you will be enabled to join with the happy converts of ancient and modern times (1), in this hymn of praise: 'I give thee thanks, O God, my

(1) St. Austin's Soliloquies, c. 33, quoted by Dean Cressy, Exomol. p. 655.

'enlightener and deliverer; for that thou has opened 'the eyes of my soul to know thee. Alas! too late 'have I known thee, O ancient and eternal Truth! 'too late have I known thee.'

I am, Dear Sir, yours, &c.

J. M.

THE END OF PART I.

ERRATA.

Page viii,	line 2,	Note, *for* are execrable *read* are as execrable.
5,	15,	*for* on the above *read* alluded to above.
26,	17,	*dele* and.
29,	2,	*for* 7th *read* 20th.
34,	2,	*for* a desire *read* a series.
45,	9,	*for* start *read* stark.
61.	2,	*after* Regicides, *add* and to.
70,	1,	*after* Holy Ghost *add a reference, and in a corresponding note in the margin, add* Visit. Saxon.
133,	18,	*for* emblem *read* emblems.
Ibid.	25,	*for* it *read* them.

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